6

'We presume that its influence is nowhere greater than in the Universities': Ending and Defending American Slavery

On 8 June 1868, the Reverend Dr William Hepworth Thompson, the Vice-Chancellor, received a welcome letter. William Mercer Green, the first Episcopal bishop of Mississippi and one of the founders of the University of the South (or "Sewanee"), thanked Thompson and Cambridge for donating thirty books to help found Sewanee's library. The volumes included a Bible, the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, a philosophical study of the Trinity of Plato and Philo Judaeus and its impact on early Christian ecclesiology (perhaps a suggestion from Thompson, a famed classical scholar), the volumes of *Astronomical Observations made at the Observatory of Cambridge*, a catalogue of specimens at the Cambridge Anatomical Museum (which mentioned three 'skulls of Negroes' presented by 'George Budd, MD [and fellow of] Caius College'), multiple editions of the catalogue of Cambridge manuscripts, and an index of printed books preserved in the library. The donation distilled Cambridge's numerous contributions to literary, scientific, religious, and philosophical thought over the preceding centuries. Green recognised the enlightened collection as such: 'I take pleasure', he wrote, 'in conveying to you the thanks of our "Board" for the liberal donation of Books which your honourable University has, through the Bishop of Tennessee, made to our infant Institution'.[1]

The "Bishop" mentioned therein was William Quintard. Hailing from Stamford, Connecticut, Quintard moved to Memphis, Tennessee, to continue his medical practice but soon gave up this profession for the priesthood after meeting James Hervey Otey, the first Episcopal bishop of Tennessee. Otey was the son of a Virginian slaveholder, and he envisioned a 'literary and theological seminary' – a dream that became the University of the South, (a white supremacist institution, as Otey intended, to train a white 'native' ministry). From the beginning, as Sewanee's research into its history has shown, the University was intended to add cultural and religious lustre to the Southern enslaver class, allowing them to 'go forth [bearing] a tone that shall elevate the whole country'. Between 1857 and 1859, the Sewanee Mining Company, which derived a significant proportion of its early profits from leasing Black convicts, donated 10,000 acres of land that the University stands upon.[2]

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The American Civil War, which lasted for four years and devastated the southern plantation economy, threatened these plans – and, in turn, the enthusiastic founders of Sewanee sought to defend the Confederate states. The first three Chancellors of Sewanee, Otey of Tennessee, Polk of Louisiana, and Elliott of Georgia were Confederate enslavers, and Quintard – despite initial pro-Union sympathies – served as a regimental surgeon and helped to compile *The Confederate Soldier's Pocket Manual of Devotions*, which offered blessings to 'Thy servant, the President of the Confederate States [Jefferson Davis], and all others in authority; and so replenish them with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to Thy will, and walk in Thy way'.[3]

After the Civil War, Quintard made five trips to England to request donations for the fledgling institution, hoping to put Sewanee (quite literally) on the map. The Confederate sympathiser was amongst friends: according to the historian Richard Blackett, thirty-nine out of forty-four clergymen identified as Confederate supporters were Anglicans, many of whom had deep ties to the universities. Having preached at the Cambridge University Church and received an honorary doctorate from that university, Quintard returned to Sewanee with £2,500 raised from the leaders of the Anglican church (see Figure 6.1). Joining Oxford University, who provided £150 for books, Cambridge donors included the Vice Chancellor (£5.5), William Selwyn, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity (£10.10), and his brother George Selwyn, the Bishop of New Zealand and namesake of Selwyn College, Cambridge (£10). The committee organising the donations also depended on the expertise of William Emery, a former Dean and Bursar at Corpus, and Alexander Beresford-Hope, a Confederate sympathiser (and the recipient of a Cambridge honorary doctorate). At Sewanee's re-opening in 1868, Quintard hoped that the 'first-class Church university' would 'in some degree do for our country what the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have so well done for England and the civilized world, the University of the South has begun its work for God and our land'.[4]

For Green, Quintard, and their comrades, therefore, the Cambridge gift, was a message of solidarity in the cause of spreading and defending white "civilisation" in the southern United States. The donation was more than an eclectic collection of religious, scientific, and philosophical works – Green considered it 'as something more than a disinterested contribution to the cause of Religion and Learning'. It was a token of 'National and Christian good-will' and Green hoped that Cambridge's generous gift would 'draw more closely together two people who ought ever to be One in love and good works, as they are One in Faith, and in Tongue, and in the enlightened pursuit of civilized life'. He concluded: 'As the descendants of Englishmen, the great mass of our people [Southerners] take pride in those two great lights of the "Mother Country" – Oxford and Cambridge; and will ever rejoice in their welfare'.[5]

For Sewanee, Britain's ancient universities were a reference point: the satin ermine of the Sewanee vice-chancellor's gown was appropriated from

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Cambridge's attire; Cambridge-educated men, such as Professor Caskie Harrison, took up tenured positions at the University of the South; and its Gothic architecture was an inspiration for southerners. In 'redeeming' Christianity and maintaining through the 'portals of slavery, an inferior, subject, dependent and necessary race, on which his whole order of civilization is based', Sewanee claimed that they were in common cause with Cambridge.[6]

Slavery had ended in the British Atlantic, yet Cambridge's connections to Sewanee reveal that the problems of American slavery and American freedom remained pivotal to British intellectual life. After abolition, Cambridge members were actively involved in discussions and debates concerning enslavement in the United States. As with the preceding decades and centuries, the University reflected the complex racial views of British society writ-large, with some students and fellows – notably Edward Strutt Abdy and Alexander Crummell – actively opposed to the southern "slave power". Still, pro-Confederate intellectuals provided monetary and ideological support for those southern enslavers during the Civil War. The first section follows the efforts of students, alumni, and fellows to challenge the cotton economy that was a mainspring of Britain's growing industrial sector. Crummell, an early pan-Africanist, is well-known in both scholarly and public histories, but Abdy remains a more marginalised figure in histories of British abolitionism. Following these antebellum abolitionists, the discussion will turn to students and fellows' involvement in spreading pro-Confederate or pro-Union opinions, with Cambridge as divided as most British urban centers on whether the slaveholding South were fighting a just war of independence against the North, or whether they deserved opprobrium as tyrannical enslavers. In the Cambridge Union, lecture halls, student societies, and private correspondence and pamphleteering, the problem of African American slavery was another front in the often-uncivil war of words over enslavement in the British Empire.

Edward Strutt Abdy was at the forefront of these debates. The fifth son of a local Essex church man, Abdy was educated at Felsted School and then at Jesus College, where he was elected a fellow after finishing his bachelor's degree in 1813. Abdy's extended family was connected to chattel slavery: Sir William Abdy, the Seventh Baronet, earned around £13,404 from two Antigua plantations and one estate in Saint Vincent in the 1833 settlement; and Edward was also related to Thomas Rutherforth, the long-deceased Regius Professor. Abdy, however, dedicated his life to the abolitionist cause in the United States. Abdy's radicalism on race relations – he was a supporter of interracial marriage, for instance – has perhaps ensured that the Jesuan fellow alongside his firebrand forbears, including the radical Peter Peckard, have been forgotten in histories which have often privileged more gradualist figures such as William Wilberforce in the pantheon of Cambridge abolitionism.[7]

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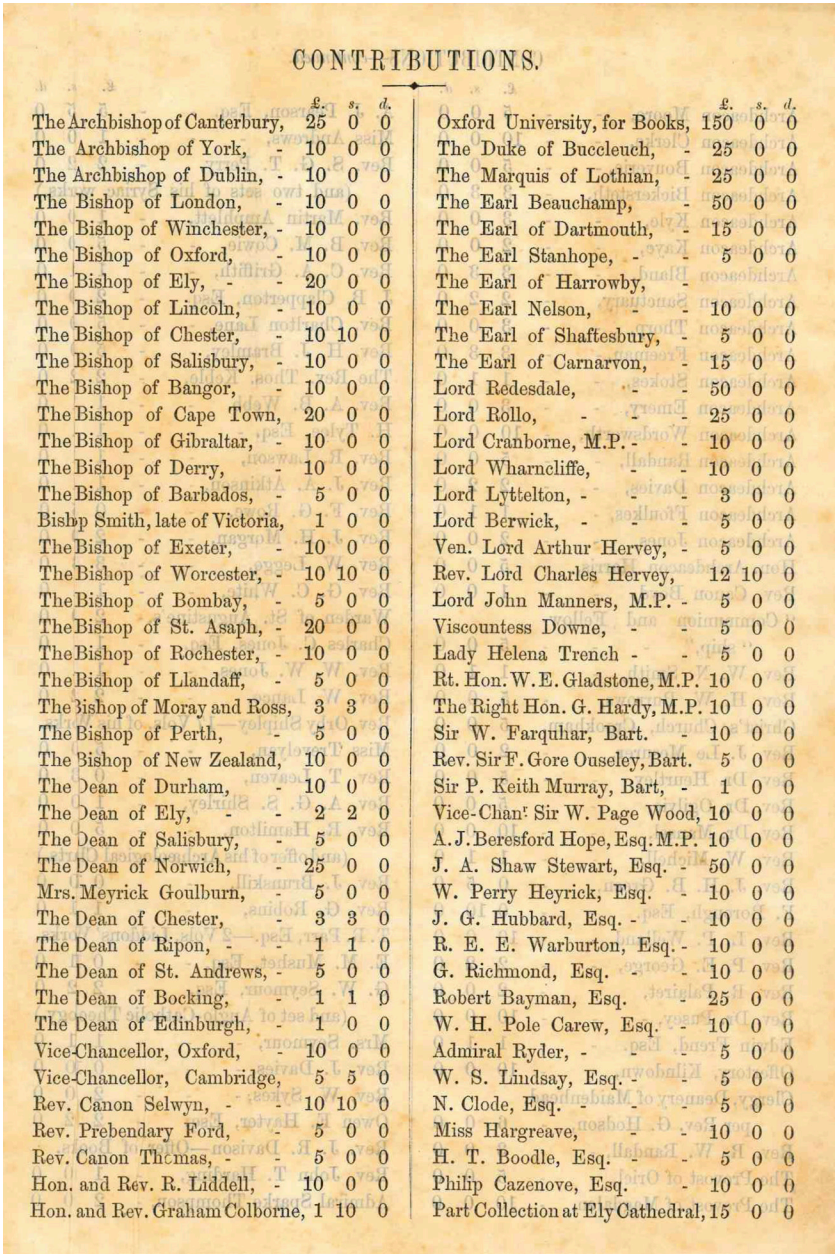

CONTRIBUTIONS.

	£.	s.	d.
The Archbishop of Canterbury,	25	0	0
The Archbishop of York, -	10	0	0
The Archbishop of Dublin, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of London, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Winchester, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Oxford, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Ely, - -	20	0	0
The Bishop of Lincoln, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Chester, -	10	10	0
The Bishop of Salisbury, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Bangor, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Cape Town,	20	0	0
The Bishop of Gibraltar, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Derry, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Barbados, -	5	0	0
Bishop Smith, late of Victoria,	1	0	0
The Bishop of Exeter, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Worcester, -	10	10	0
The Bishop of Bombay, -	5	0	0
The Bishop of St. Asaph, -	20	0	0
The Bishop of Rochester, -	10	0	0
The Bishop of Llandaff, -	5	0	0
The Bishop of Moray and Ross,	3	3	0
The Bishop of Perth, -	5	0	0
The Bishop of New Zealand,	10	0	0
The Dean of Durham, -	10	0	0
The Dean of Ely, - -	2	2	0
The Dean of Salisbury, -	5	0	0
The Dean of Norwich, -	25	0	0
Mrs. Meyrick Goulburn, -	5	0	0
The Dean of Chester, -	3	3	0
The Dean of Ripon, - -	1	1	0
The Dean of St. Andrews, -	5	0	0
The Dean of Bocking, -	1	1	0
The Dean of Edinburgh, -	1	0	0
Vice-Chancellor, Oxford, -	10	0	0
Vice-Chancellor, Cambridge,	5	5	0
Rev. Canon Selwyn, - -	10	10	0
Rev. Prebendary Ford, -	5	0	0
Rev. Canon Thomas, - -	5	0	0
Hon. and Rev. R. Liddell, -	10	0	0
Hon. and Rev. Graham Colborne,	1	10	0

	£.	s.	d.
Oxford University, for Books,	150	0	0
The Duke of Buccleuch, -	25	0	0
The Marquis of Lothian, -	25	0	0
The Earl Beauchamp, -	50	0	0
The Earl of Dartmouth, -	15	0	0
The Earl Stanhope, - -	5	0	0
The Earl of Harrowby, -			
The Earl Nelson, - -	10	0	0
The Earl of Shaftesbury, -	5	0	0
The Earl of Carnarvon, -	15	0	0
Lord Redesdale, - -	50	0	0
Lord Rollo, - - -	25	0	0
Lord Cranborne, M.P. - -	10	0	0
Lord Wharncliffe, - -	10	0	0
Lord Lyttelton, - - -	3	0	0
Lord Berwick, - - -	5	0	0
Ven. Lord Arthur Hervey, -	5	0	0
Rev. Lord Charles Hervey,	12	10	0
Lord John Manners, M.P. -	5	0	0
Viscountess Downe, - -	5	0	0
Lady Helena Trench - -	5	0	0
Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.	10	0	0
The Right Hon. G. Hardy, M.P.	10	0	0
Sir W. Farquhar, Bart. -	10	0	0
Rev. Sir F. Gore Ouseley, Bart.	5	0	0
Sir P. Keith Murray, Bart, -	1	0	0
Vice-Chan: Sir W. Page Wood,	10	0	0
A. J. Beresford Hope, Esq. M.P.	10	0	0
J. A. Shaw Stewart, Esq. -	50	0	0
W. Perry Heyrick, Esq. -	10	0	0
J. G. Hubbard, Esq. - -	10	0	0
R. E. E. Warburton, Esq. -	10	0	0
G. Richmond, Esq. - -	10	0	0
Robert Bayman, Esq. -	25	0	0
W. H. Pole Carew, Esq. -	10	0	0
Admiral Ryder, - - -	5	0	0
W. S. Lindsay, Esq. - -	5	0	0
N. Clode, Esq. - - -	5	0	0
Miss Hargreave, - -	10	0	0
H. T. Boodle, Esq. - -	5	0	0
Philip Cazenove, Esq. -	10	0	0
Part Collection at Ely Cathedral,	15	0	0

Figure 6.1 An Offering from English Churchmen to the American Bishops. Towards the Re-establishment of their University for the South and South-West Dioceses, Charles Todd Quintard Papers. Sewanee: University of the South.

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In 1834, Abdy travelled to the United States to study New York's Auburn Prison, widely seen as a model of prison reform. Alexis de Tocqueville, the French aristocrat, had journeyed there three years earlier, and Abdy began a grand tour encompassing New England, Washington, D.C., and several western and southern states. Unlike de Tocqueville, Abdy spent much of his time in free Black communities. Published in 1835 with the assistance of John Murray II (the member of a prominent family of travel publishers), his three-volume *Journal* was far more radical than most contemporary white abolitionist pamphlets. With his Cambridge collegiate credentials highlighted on the title page, he attacked Americans and American slavery on all fronts. He criticised New Yorkers for paying Black teachers less than whites for work in African schools, and he condemned the treatment of free Black people in the northern states. Visiting Hartford, Connecticut, Abdy spent time listening to the opinions and experiences of the town's beleaguered Black residents, who told him it was 'hardly safe' to walk the streets at night, or else be showered with stones and racist epithets. Abdy also witnessed America's longstanding tradition of anti-Black racial violence in New York City on 7 July 1834, when a mob attacked an antislavery meeting at the Chatham Street Chapel, precipitating further rioting that month.[8]

Abdy's travels convinced him that white Americans were collectively responsible for enslavement. Observing the nation's capital of Washington, D.C., Abdy wrote with disdain that a slave pen was visible from the Capitol Building. Arriving at Robey's Tavern, a slave market, he described it as a 'wretched hovel' that was 'surrounded by a wooden paling fourteen or fifteen feet in height' to prevent escape, and the pen had exposed 'both sexes, and all ages' to the sweltering heat and biting, freezing temperatures of winter, noting that some had 'actually frozen to death'. Enraged, Abdy derided America's religious communities, including Quakers, for their 'disgraceful servility' to enslavers; and, regarding the so-called planters, Abdy mocked their 'chivalry' and denounced them as 'bandits' and 'pirates' whose "property" was 'defended by violence' – 'heartless oppressor[s]' who he hoped might be attacked in the future by 'some sable Spartacus or some colored Kosciuszko'. Abdy noted that the US was 'in debt to outraged humanity. She has enriched herself by plunder and oppression'. Combining letters, testimonies, and diary entries, the *Journal* was a witness statement against enslavement in the antebellum United States, a nation that he (correctly) predicted was on course for a 'civil or a servile war'.[9]

Abdy's commentary then turned to American university intellectuals, especially proslavery European immigrants in the southern states. These migrants included Thomas Hewitt Key, who, after coming up to St John's and Trinity colleges, was recruited as the founding Professor of Pure Mathematics at the University of Virginia – an institution which later received $250 worth of books from Cambridge University Press because of the generosity of W. Gordon McCabe, a Confederate officer. (It was not the last Virginia-bound

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donation: Robert Potts, a Trinity mathematics tutor, sent money to the College of William and Mary in 1859 after a fire gutted its main building.) Key also enslaved Sally Cottrell, who had laboured for Ellen Randolph Coolidge, Thomas Jefferson's granddaughter. George Long, whose publications often credited him as a 'late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge', also emigrated to Virginia to become a professor of languages. Long married a local widow and, when they returned to England, they had a 'black friend' as a companion: the formerly enslaved manservant Jacob Walker. Long, a founder of the Royal Geographical Society, published his *Geography of America* in 1841, which characterised African Americans as in a 'degraded condition' that 'produces in most of them its natural effect of making them mean, timid, lying, and thievish'. According to Long, the enslaved were a subservient race who had been reconciled to their condition due to 'a sense of the natural superiority of the whites'.[10]

Meeting Charles Follen, a Harvard University Professor of German and chair of a committee for the New England Anti-Slavery Society Convention, Abdy contrasted that professor with these university enslavers. 'The professor', he recalled, 'who had been driven across the Atlantic, by the enemies of political liberty in his own country, had not, like too many exiles from Europe, attempted to conciliate the friends of personal slavery in the land of his adoption, by open advocacy or servile indifference'. Abdy, an honorary life member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society – which was dedicated to the immediate abolition of enslavement and the liberation of 'unrighteously oppressed' slaves – praised Follen's work with that organisation, acclaiming him for his 'pure love of freedom, a sincere conviction that the happiness of every one is the happiness of all'. Professor Follen's lectures appealed to his students to envision Africa as the cradle of human civilisation, and he often raised the example of Egypt in his lectures to highlight the wonders of Black civilisation. It was more frustrating to Abdy, then, that Follen had suffered the 'obloquy' of Harvard – the funders for Follen's professorship, which included the merchant and former slave trader Thomas H. Perkins and Chinese shipping mogul Samuel Cabot, Jr., had forced him to resign on account of his activism and strident criticisms of the university administration.[11]

The three-volume *Journal* enjoyed rave reviews on both sides of the Atlantic. The text received warm, generous appraisals from *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, the *Monthly Review*, *Westminster Review*, *Monthly Repository*, *Quarterly Review*, and the *Baptist Magazine*. The Library Company of Philadelphia purchased the volumes and excerpts were featured in *Liberty* and in a later 1857 compendium titled *The Legion of Liberty!* Abdy was compared favourably to other travel writers on slavery, too, such as R. R. Madden's *Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies* and Charles Joseph Latrobe's *The Rambler in North America*. The *Monthly Review* complained that, although 'Another tour' in the United States had been published, like so 'many very ordinary publications belonging to the same field, a very tiresome work', Abdy was 'no ordinary writer' and a man who 'rises with his antagonist, and we think is triumphant'.[12]

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Abdy had Scottish supporters too. The *Journal* was published when the Glasgow and Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Societies and their Church of Scotland allies were protesting the floggings and abuses that were still being inflicted upon freed Black "apprentices" on Caribbean plantations. On 2 September 1835, Abdy thanked William Tait, an Edinburgh publisher, 'for the flattering manner in which you have spoken of a work that I felt had little to expect beyond a passing notice in a short review'. Though the initial silence around the work had 'wounded' his vanity, he hoped that 'the book must make its way as well as it can – and I trust the importance of the cause will not be lost in the demerits of the advocate'. Abdy's vanity was not the sole issue at stake – he was anxious that the book sold because the 'question' that it addressed concerned the 'welfare' and 'very existence of the republican union'.[13]

Abdy's *Journal* was an influential political tool for American abolitionists. Antislavery activists noted that northern publishers, such as Harper & Brothers, had refused to publish the text, and some criticised the editors for their dependence on the "slave power." The American Anti-Slavery Society's 1835 annual report included a letter from Harpers mentioning that since Abdy was 'an abolitionist' they 'would [therefore] have nothing to do with him'. In the war of words over enslavement, the politics of publishing Abdy's volumes became a potent weapon against the 'friends of the South'.[14]

Whilst in the United States, Abdy debated the historian William Ellery Channing, convincing him that racial prejudice, not scientific fact, accounted for Black poverty. Rejecting Channing's policy of educational segregation as the tool to end racial tensions, Abdy derided it as a plan intended 'to destroy a distinction by continuing it'. Five years later, he again confronted scientific racism in his writings. His 1842 *American Whites and Blacks in Reply to a Germany Orthodermist* argued that America's racial "problem" – the coexistence of white and Black Americans – was, contrary to Thomas Jefferson (an American President who feared a race war), an overblown concern. Rather, he thought that racial mixing and intermarriage was the ideal solution to ignorance and distrust, and he criticised the widespread immigration of Europeans to the cotton plantations in the Mississippi, calling racism the 'aristocracy of the skin'. He determined that racism was set in 'defiance' to the 'sentiments of common courtesy, the dictates of sound policy, and the precepts of pure religion'. Skin colour, he argued, was not a scientific fact – it was an accident of birth.[15]

Abdy was not opposed to phrenology – the pseudoscience of observing the skull to determine an individual's physiological and psychological attributes – in principle, however. In New York City, he visited St. Philip's Episcopal Church in lower Manhattan, whose graveyard was the final resting place of that metropolis's Black luminaries. In a section of the *Journal* titled 'Africo-American craniology', Abdy, upon noticing the skulls in the graveyard, commented that 'it may fairly be assumed' that they were the 'remains of native Africans' as they were 'both thicker and more depressed in the front than those

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of recent internment'. The former Cambridge fellow distinguished between the intellectual and physical development of 'native Africans', people who had been trafficked through the slave trade, and African Americans, a people who whites thought had been "civilised" through their interactions with Euro-Americans.[16]

These attitudes reflected developing phrenological opinions in Cambridge. In 1826, Dr Johann Gaspar Spurzheim visited Cambridge, and his lectures were 'received with very marked respect' and 'attended very well by the resident members, and by most of the tutors and lecturers of Colleges'. Born near Trier in Germany, Spurzheim, who had studied medicine at the University of Vienna, lectured widely in Europe and the United States on his *The Physiognomical System*. The enthusiastic attendees of his seminars on phrenology in the Cambridge 'botanical lecture-room' – a 'favor never conferred on any who are not members of the establishment' – 'increased as the course advanced; till, towards the close, it amounted to 130, among whom were 57, partly professors, partly tutors, and fellows of different colleges'. The lectures included lessons on doctrine and live dissections of brain matter, and Cambridge men feverishly discussed his theories. *The Phrenological Journal* reported in 1837 that diligent students were 'perusing' Spurzheim's work and attempting to 'attack the strongholds of metaphysical dogmas, even in the bosom of an University'. The *Journal* could not contain their enthusiasm, gushing that within ten months 'one of the leading characters in the University' had made a failed proposal to hold the *Journal* at the local Philosophical Society, and that a 'rising generation' of men, who were more interested in medical and scientific pursuits than religion, had started to collect casts and skulls and had made phrenology a 'favourite theme of discussion'. One college member reportedly had seventy to eighty casts of living members of the University.[17]

Abdy's writings were predicated on such civilising language, and he called for the 'blessings of civilisation to Africa': the gospel and the virtues of commercial society. Yet Abdy also advocated for the recognition of Haitian independence, an immediate end to American slavery, and his belief that violence – not conciliation with enslavers – may be required to end the slave power. He sombrely concluded that a 'war for America will be a war of freedom; and the blood of Africa will "lie heavy on her soul" on the day of battle'. A friend of William Lloyd Garrison and the Black Philadelphian abolitionist James Forten, and a man who helped to form the American Anti-Slavery Society and donated to British abolitionist causes, Abdy exemplified both the limits (in regard to his phrenological opinions) and radicalism of white abolition. Abdy died on 12 October 1846, but the unmarried fellow left his entire estate, estimated at £500, to American antislavery organisations.[18]

Cambridge educated other radical individuals in the battle against American slavery, among them free African Americans who studied at the University. Alexander Crummell was the most notable among them. Born in New York on 3 March 1819 to Charity Hicks, a free woman of colour, and Boston Crummell,

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a former enslaved man, Crummell grew up on one of the frontlines of abolition politics. New York owed much of its wealth to the booming cotton trade, and it was there that Crummell's parents and other abolitionists struggled against the enslavers who grew, spun, and sold that "white gold," which when Alexander was born accounted for forty per cent of that city's exports. The Crummell family home was the assembly point for the organisers of the first African American owned newspaper, the *Freedom's Journal*, and Alexander's education at the African Free School and from his father instilled in him a lifelong sense of belonging to an African diaspora that encompassed the homelands of his ethnic Temne people in Sierra Leone and Guinea.[19]

Forced to travel abroad to Britain after he was refused entry to General Theological Seminary in New York and then in a Philadelphia congregation on account of his race, Crummell travelled to England in 1847. During a speaking tour, Crummell captured the attention of white abolitionists, including Wilberforce, who helped him afford living expenses of around £200 annually at Queens', attending a university famed in American abolition circles for educating Peckard and Clarkson. White charity served Crummell's grander purpose: a Black man with an education at Oxford and Cambridge (two prestigious universities which he considered far 'superior' to the fledgling American colleges) would, he admitted, have a 'lively and startling influence among the prejudiced and proslavery at home', who considered African Americans as intellectually and morally degraded. Crummell hoped that the 'standard of learning' amongst his Black countrymen would be raised, and the influence of an educated clergyman of colour could have '*permanent* advantages' for 'my people and my race in America'. The New Yorker excelled considering his inexperience in Latin, passing his final exams after two attempts, and continuing his lecturing tour throughout England, spreading his Pan-African vision: that one's African identity should be embraced to enable Black solidary in the Atlantic world.[20]

American slavery was a much-debated topic in Cambridge. Public lectures and seminars, Anna Roderick suggests, helped to foster a 'knowledge-based culture' in the Victorian era that did not shy away from national discussions over suffrage and education, or international debates concerning military affairs, empire, and slavery. The-then mayor Richard Foster organised anti-slavery meetings in the Town Hall where residents heard from white abolitionists like the Reverend Elon Galusha, the New York representative of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and Edward Barrett, a formerly enslaved Jamaican who tactfully stressed to his audience that he had undergone (thanks to the 'instrumentality of Missionaries') a Christian conversion and that he did not take part in the Baptist War, an eleven-day failed revolution of 60,000 enslaved people against white rule. Barrett's omission of his involvement was revealing. The slavers' brutal suppression of the revolt (lasting from Christmas Day 1831 until 5 January 1832) and the execution of Samuel

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Sharpe, a Black Baptist, had inspired abolitionist opinion in Britain. Barrett perhaps diplomatically tailored his life story to the white audience, who wanted to hear more about his 'heartfelt gratitude' for being 'rescued' from his 'fetters by British liberality' due to the Slavery Abolition Act, rather than being confronted with a Black revolutionary who had taken up arms against colonial rule.[21]

Barrett was not the last Black lecturer to inform the Cambridge freeholders about his past. The extraordinary success of the American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was published in two volumes in 1852 and sold perhaps a million and a half copies in England alone, further increased demand for first-hand accounts of slavery. On 15 September 1855, the Cambridge audience heard a 'thrilling' lecture from Ellen and William Craft, two formerly enslaved people who had managed to escape because 'Mrs. Craft' had disguised herself as a white slaveholder (with her husband 'the slave in attendance'). Following the discussion, a collection was made at the door, part of which was to be 'added to a fund for buying the freedom of the mother of Mrs. Craft, who is still in slavery'. The effort to free Ellen's mother, Maria, from bondage in Georgia – which echoed the experiences of Frederick Douglass, whose freedom was purchased for £150 thanks to the tireless efforts of Quaker abolitionists – succeeded after the American Civil War. The next lecture took place almost a year later on Sidney Street in the heart of Cambridge. The speaker was William Watson, 'late of King's College, London', who regaled his audience on the importance of a slave's education through a short history of his life – a history of enslaver violence that, he and the newspaper publicist both believed, would 'bear testimony to the authenticity of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."' The speakers after the publication of Stowe's novel continued to provide more proof, if any was needed, of the veracity of her claims. George Panell, an 'escaped' enslaved person, delivered a June 1858 talk, too, on the 'cruelty he had undergone while a slave, and how he escaped'. With slave narratives becoming ever more popular, Black lecturers travelled throughout Britain to maintain antislavery fervour in one of the epicentres of abolition.[22]

Aside from these more cerebral meetings, musical and theatrical performances informed audiences about enslavement. Victorians enjoyed a dramatic expansion in the number of theatres that catered for the British masses, including working people, with more than 300 imperial-themed plays being performed that informed viewers about incidents in India, South Africa, the Sudan, and Australia. On 22 March 1854, the Theatre Royal in Cambridge (the town's first permanent theatre, which was built in 1816) presented 'a Series of PANORAMIC SKETCHES, ENTITLED *Negro Life! in Freedom and in Slavery*' conducted by Henry Russell. The songs included "The African Village" – with its lyrics regaling audiences of a continent 'Where the lonely Negro village rears its rude and rustic eaves; Where the untaught savage bows to his idol in its shrine' – "The Chase of the Slave-Trader by a British Cruiser," and "The Slave

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Sale – Come who bids?" It would take two decades, though, before Black performers sang in Cambridge.[23]

On 13 June 1876, the Cambridge Guildhall hosted the Fisk Jubilee Singers. An African American acapella group formed to raise funds for Fisk University, a historically Black college in the United States founded ten years prior, the group communicated a 'culture of opposition' where Black transatlantic performers, including anti-lynching campaigners like Ida B. Wells, used their performances to attack white American racism. That evening the Jubilee singers delivered 'a SERVICE of SONG consisting of THE QUAINT HYMNS AND MELODIES, Sung by them in their Days of Slavery', with the proceeds 'to be devoted to the EDUCATION OF FREE SLAVES AT FISK UNIVERSITY, U.S.A'. The Singers' performance of spirituals such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Wade in the Water," the music echoing throughout the halls, told a 'tale', the abolitionist Frederick Douglass had written regarding such music on a separate occasion, 'which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones, loud, long and deep, breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish'. The spirituals affected audiences with the music of the enslaved.[24]

Examinations provided another opportunity for students to ponder the moral, legal, and economic underpinnings of enslavement. Public exams were more unusual at the beginning of the nineteenth century, however more meritocratic "middle-class examinations" were becoming standard practice at Oxford and Cambridge – and the Royal Commission of 1850, charged with inquiring into the labrynthine organisation and finances of the two ancient universities and its constituent colleges, had introduced the natural sciences and moral sciences Tripos. From the era of reform onwards, when the Anglican stranglehold over the universities was loosened, undergraduates, it appears, were instructed in the moral foundations of North American slavery. Students in the 1832 Bachelor of Arts examinations discussed Paley's maxims on enslavement, including whether there was 'any argument in favour of Slavery, that it is no where condemned in the Scriptures?', to 'Define Slavery, and shew from what causes it can arise consistently with the law of nature', and state from 'what causes' slavery 'may arise'.[25]

Fifty years later, the moral sciences and political economy examinations presented students with more ethical quandaries to consider. Candidates debated whether it was 'always wrong to act against one's conscience, though not always right to follow it… Is it [therefore] right for one who believes slavery to be wicked to assist a slave to escape against the laws of the country?', and 'What circumstances tend to determine the average rate of profit in a country? Why is it, generally speaking, low in a country where there is a large population of *slaves*?' – an effort to make students question the economic viability of enslavement. Following Clarkson's example, students also applied to and won prize competitions with poetry, essays, and treatises that considered the singular

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importance of Christianity to the abolition of slavery in medieval England and on the numerous international laws that sought to restrict the African slave trade.[26]

After taking in the sights in Cambridge (or strenuously preparing for his exams), Crummell made friends with college fellows. One was Charles Clayton, who had a long career at Caius. The son of a Cambridge fishmonger, Clayton was admitted as a pensioner and scholar at the College after attending the local Perse School (which Stephen Perse, a Caian physician and fellow, had founded in 1615 as a collegiate feeder school to mend town and gown relations). Awarded the Browne Medal in Latin and Greek Poetry, Clayton held a fellowship from 1838 to 1866, with shorter stints as a Hebrew (1842–1844) and Greek Lecturer (1842–1846). His diary mentions their meetings. On 7 April 1848, he scrawled 'Mr. Crummell, from New York, arrived'. That same month he had also brought Crummell along to tour several local schools, as Clayton was involved in religious education. Apart from attending missionary meetings (where Crummell sometimes addressed the audience), dining and walking with the Crummells, and bringing him along to meet other Cambridge academic luminaries, he also mentioned their attendance at 'the boat-races'. As with enslavers and fellows, therefore, personal and familial relationships between Black abolitionists and white Cambridge missionaries were vital to antislavery networks both within and beyond that market town.[27]

The Caius man's evangelicalism was the foundation of his friendship with Crummell. In his diary, Clayton commented that 'A Missionary must have a thorough knowledge of religions, of the nature of man, & must be entirely devoted [to] his cause'. He was a member of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and Secretary of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, which aimed to 'carry the Gospel, by means of the Church, to every's man's door'. Slavery was discussed in these missionary meetings. In November 1836, the CMS heard of one twenty-two-year-old evangelical's struggles to convert the Māori, with a 'Chieftain wishing to kill his slave, afterwards converted by this slave'. To make matters worse, an 'old man' had interrupted the 'white mens' prayers' and sermons exclaiming 'tis a lie'. The conversion of Afro-Caribbeans following emancipation continued to be one of the principal goals of the CMS. Professor James Scholefield claimed that with £64,000 in income the Society could maintain its 'ten stations' in 'Western Africa; the Mediterranean; the West Indies; (in the East Indies) Calcutta, Madras, Bombay; Ceylon; North[-]West America; New Zealand; China[.]' Missionary Anglicanism had met with its share of problems, with the 'Climate very unhealthy; many have died; Miss[ionar]y band thus very much reduced[.]'[28]

Clayton was a committed abolitionist. He attended meetings of the Anti-Slavery Society and, at one time, contemplated missionary work in Sierra Leone. At one such meeting in the Guildhall at Rochester, Clayton heard from New York abolitionist figures such as Henry Brewster Stanton, a writer for

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Garrison's *Anti-Slavery Standard* and *The Liberator*. According to Clayton's diary on 18 August 1839, Stanton – though there was regrettably 'no religion however in his speech' – spoke of slavery's 'cruelties', the attacks on 'whigs' by 'Anti-Abolitionists', and the 'tongue-tie of ye Press & pulpit[.]' From 1849, Clayton had a growing interest in leaving Cambridge for Sierra Leone, which was then in the process of appointing its first bishop, and he eagerly felt that 'men's minds are turning to Africa'. He met with a merchant from West Africa, and Henry Venn even mentioned that he would 'probably be offered the see' in the colony.[29]

Though Crummell visited Liberia, the Caius man was too attached to life in Cambridge to leave. Elizabeth Melville's *Journal of a Residence in Sierra Leone* had further dissuaded him from African missionary work, and its commentary – mocking the local 'woolly-haired children', stating that 'all the Black people seem alike', observing that women did not wear shoes and that their gait 'is exactly that of a goose', and her descriptions of the dangerous climate, including bugs, termites, and fevers – was unlikely to inspire Europeans to migrate to West Africa. For his part, Clayton wrote that he was 'Somewhat dejected at the prospect of being one day sent thither', but he conceded that God would place him where 'I may best glorify Thee, – for Jesus' sake'.[30]

In 1848, Clayton offered prayers to the audience when Crummell gave a speech in the Cambridge Town Hall on the "Spiritual Condition of the Negro Race in the United States." Lecturing to an audience that included the Reverend Dr Alfred Ollivant, Regius Professor of Divinity, the Reverend J. Rowlands, a Queens' fellow, and the Reverend H. A. Marsh, Dean of Trinity, Crummell explained the nature and realities of enslavement in the United States. 'He stated', a newspaper reported, 'that physically, politically, intellectually, and spiritually, the negro race in the United States were in the most miserable and degraded condition'. The more than 3 million enslaved people, he declared, 'were bought and sold like cattle' – with a 'regular trade… kept up between the more northern slave states and the southern slave states'. The transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans may have ended in the British Empire and the United States, he feared, but the internal slave trade – with perhaps 835,000 enslaved trafficked between 1790 and 1860 to the cotton states – was thriving and profitable. The conditions on the plantations, Crummell argued, were atrocious: the enslaved were poorly fed, uneducated, overworked, and 'whipped and scourged'.[31]

Liberated African Americans were free in name only; their condition, he observed, was one of 'nominal freedom' – in contrast to the French and Spanish Caribbean, or even Brazil, where 'a negro became relieved from slavery, he rose immediately to a condition of equality'. Crummell compared the 'caste' system in the United States to British India, complaining that it was a system of 'perfect exclusion' where Black artisans were unable to be apprentices, Black schoolchildren could not attend white schools, and where Black parishioners

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were unable to sit or pray in the same pews as whites. Hoping to raise funds for a Black church in New York whilst in England, Crummell proclaimed that education was the pathway to equality. 'If they', he claimed, 'only had institutions from which they could send forth annually virtuous and capable men into all the avenues of life, slavery and caste would certainly recede, like mist beside the mountain before the glory of the morning sun'. Neither 'agitation' nor 'deep and ardent indignation', he argued, would end enslavement. New Black colleges and churches, for which he raised more than £16 from audience contributions, were the solution. Crummell was an important contributor to a longstanding strain of thought within African-descended communities, which stressed that Black self-reliance, not armed resistance, would end the white "slave power" in the United States.[32]

The spirit for Black education was felt amongst evangelical activists in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the Oxford don William Charles Dowding's efforts to revive Berkeley's scheme for a Christian college in Bermuda, known as St Paul's College, was illustrative of post-emancipation racial animosities in that region. Dowding had cause for confidence – after all, religious organisations continued to receive money from university men, such as Robert Griffin Laing of Trinity's donation of £500 in consolidated government bonds to the SPCK, and the classicist Christopher Wordsworth's subscription to the Christian Faith Society (the successor to Porteus's mission for Black conversion). The Sir Peregrine Maitland essay prize was founded at Cambridge, too, in 1844 and promised £100 to the top student writing on 'the propagation of the Gospel, through missionary exertions, in India and in other parts of the heathen world.' General Maitland had supported missionary efforts whilst Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada (1818–1828), where he was an 'early proponent of [Indigenous] boarding schools'. Missionary schemes were ongoing in the Caribbean: since emancipation, the Cambridge Bible Association had, with the assistance of the Professors Scholefield and Farish and local women, aimed to free people 'from the slavery of Satan as well as man'; and sermons to that end had been preached in Cambridge churches with the profits from the sale of those addresses supporting the construction of chapels and schoolhouses for the formerly enslaved.[33]

As one of the preeminent British centers of learning, Dowding lobbied Trinity College, Cambridge, for support. Writing to William Whewell, the then-Master, in March 1852, Dowding hoped that his '*academical*' project would 'obtain the special sympathy of our great Universities' – and, in pursuit of that mission, he wanted the 'two Universities' to raise at least £25,000 for building work, fellowships, and scholarships that would attract students to the school. The document that Dowding enclosed with his initial letter may have been his *Africa in the West*. Declaring Africa to be the 'crux of philanthropy', the 1852 treatise was an exemplar of humanitarian intervention, yet – unlike abolitionist efforts to "civilise" Africans in Africa – Dowding claimed

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that 'this question is solving itself *on the other side [of] the Atlantic*. The future of Africa is to be looked for in the West'. For Dowding (as for Porteus and the former abolitionists), the Caribbean was a humanitarian laboratory to "civilise" Africans and, they hoped, raise them from a state of 'childhood' and 'fix the graft of refinement upon the stock of barbarism'. The warning signs for the project were clear: the education advocate Susette Harriet Lloyd, who sought to promote Black education on Bermuda, was concerned that, as emancipation approached, the 4,297 white Bermudans had instituted property requirements for voting to disenfranchise the around 4,898 free and enslaved Black inhabitants on the island.[34]

Cambridge had a starring role in this doomed endeavour, with exhibitioners at the Black college holding a position as a 'Bye-Fellow at Cambridge; ranking in all social respects as a Fellow, but having no voice in the College government'. Emancipation, Dowding's supporters claimed, would remain unfulfilled and unachieved without 'raising the Negro race in the West Indies in the scale of educated and intellectual beings'. The Master must have been supportive given that Dowding thanked him for the 'kind manner' in which he had responded and he hoped that – since Berkeley's original proposal had royal support – the Trinity fellow would entreat Queen Victoria to become patron because there was 'no name at Cambridge which she would more willing meet than one so well known to her as your own'. St Paul's had an illustrious group of academic supporters: Whewell, the masters of St John's, St Catharine's, and Peterhouse colleges, and the Regius Professor of Divinity. The Governor of Bermuda and former Protector of Slaves in British Guiana, Charles Elliot, also served as Vice-President. His support was, in an ominous sign, much more tentative – and he wrote in June 1851 that, if the scheme was going to be a success, it would be due to the 'exertions of Individuals, and I am not aware that there are any measures which it is at present in the power of H. M's: Govt. to adopt to promote its success'. St Paul's was established in 1853, surviving three years and offering a curriculum rooted in classical and modern languages, music, and history – but the reaction that the institution stirred in the British Caribbean was a lesson in the durability and malleability of anti-Black racism.[35]

The Bermuda barrister and Inspector of Schools, Samuel Brownlow Grey, condemned Dowding's project. Writing to John Bird Sumner, the Archbishop of Canterbury (and a supporter of Dowding's 'noble project'), Grey defended Bermudans, whose resistance to the plan had been incorrectly 'represented to your Grace, as another phase in the history of human error, the bigotry of ignorance, and the sad effects of slavery on the minds and hearts of all who have even lived within its atmosphere'. Having been denounced as the 'enemies of liberty and learning and of the coloured race', the barrister's ire was focused on the missionaries, and he questioned whether the 'wild and dangerous' proposals of 'great names' were intended to manufacture 'a fusion between the coloured people in this hemisphere and the fair daughters of their

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English homes?' Disputing the structural racism in Bermudan politics, education, and society, Grey responded that racism (including his opposition to miscegenation) was based on 'distinctions of rank' and class, not on skin colour – a defense that white colonists had also applied in Jamaica. Addressing the universities, he pondered whether the 'same benevolent men [were] ready to favour a plan for putting Oxford and Cambridge within the reach of the same class of children who now pursue their humble studies in the National Society's school-rooms, or in village dame-schools?'[36]

Unlike these imperial schemes, Crummell did not fail at his goal – he was the first recorded Black graduate of the University of Cambridge. Still, his experiences at the university reflected the widespread racism in British society at the time. Racism had increased and deepened following emancipation in 1833, as Britons recalibrated their views on race as the problem of slavery became the problem of ensuring freedom for Black Britons. Considered one of the first female sociologists, Harriet Martineu was typical of British approaches to enslavement after emancipation, arguing in the independent liberal *Saturday Review* that slavery and subjugation had civilised African Americans. Although Crummell met with a warm reception before beginning his degree, breakfasting and dining with the fellows and masters of Caius and Trinity colleges, he encountered bigoted views at Cambridge. Joseph Romilly, the Trinity fellow, dismissed Crummell as the 'woolly-haired undergraduate' with a 'black wife [Sarah] and 3 black piccaninnies'. The local racism transcended distinctions of class: Romilly reported that the Crummells' Irish servant had, upon being dismissed from her position, attacked 'Mrs. Crummell' with the 'following words, "you are a black devil: you are a slave & the daughter of a slave & your heart is as black as your face!!!"' Some Irish servants in Cambridge believed that they were superior to Black people, and wielded racial epithets to make that chasm in social status known.[37]

Crummell's graduation at the Senate House was greeted with racist epithets too. There, one observer reported that 'A boisterous individual in the gallery called out "Three groans for the Queens" nigger'. In response, an undergraduate shouted 'Shame, shame! Three groans for you, Sir!' and 'Three Cheers for Crummell!' The American did not respond. He had a great deal of esteem for Cambridge, turning English ingenuity and scientific endeavour into a foil for the close-minded United States. On the university, Crummell later wrote that 'Perhaps no seat of learning in the world has done more, for human liberty and human well-being, than this institution'. Such sincerely held views were perhaps also trained on American universities, colleges, and educational institutions that had purchased and enslaved Africans.[38]

Cambridge men, of course, both entertained and challenged these racial ideologies. On race and racial difference, anatomists continued to argue that humans had diffused from one singular origin throughout the world, and that physical and cultural environment – not innate qualities – were the principal

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drivers and explanatory factors underpinning human development. Though the "Prichardian Paradigm" (named after the thesis in James Cowles Prichard's 1808 *De generis humani varietate*) was coming under sustained challenge, monogenism had adherents in Cambridge. Sir George Murray Humphry (1820–1896) was one of these theorists. Born into a high achieving and politically prominent Suffolk family (his elder brother was a Trinity fellow and another sibling was a barrister), Humphry exceeded even thosy lofty expectations: he was the youngest surgeon at Cambridge's local Addenbrooke's Hospital (which had been established in 1766), he was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons at such a young age that he had to wait to the statutory age to attain the honour, and in 1847 the Reverend William Clark, Cambridge's Professor of Anatomy, appointed him a lecturer in surgery and anatomy at the Medical School.[39]

Four years after attaining that post (during which time he was elected a fellow at Downing College), he published his *A Treatise on the Human Skeleton (Including the Joints)*, which benefitted from the expertise of his wife, Mary, who made the accurate drawings and illustrations for his published articles and books. Humphry's text contained an extensive discussion on the 'inferior races of mankind'. According to him, these ethnicities 'exhibit proportions' which were 'intermediate between the higher or European orders and the monkeys'. The 'stature' of Black people, he claimed, was 'less than in the European', their 'cranium… bears a smaller proportion to the face', and 'the foot is less well-formed in the Negro than in European… more nearly resembling the monkey's, between which and the European there is a marked difference in this particular'. Comparing the skulls of European and African peoples, Humphry concluded that a perfect anatomical frame (and not simply skull shape or size, as phrenologists had claimed) was the natural corollary of a powerful intellect. In fact, he noted that 'the ascent from the lower animals to the higher orders of mankind' was associated with both 'the actual size and capacity of the cranium' and the 'size of the whole [human] frame, and more particularly in the size, strength, and excellency of conformation of the lower extremities'. Utilising skulls held at Cambridge, including that of a Congolese person, he argued that African-descended people were closest to the earliest human beings, and that Europeans had achieved a higher state of 'growth' and 'further development'. Humphry, who advocated for the reconstruction of Addenbrooke's and the inclusion of the subject of human anatomy in the Cambridge Natural Science Tripos, remained fixated on a stadial developmental model that had Europeans at the pinnacle of civilisation, and Africans at the lowest level of human progress, effectively at the intellectual and physical level of white children.[40]

Those racial views were exhibited in the colleges, even as some fellows were determined to challenge these public and private prejudices. Henry Venn argued in November 1863 that, as a tutor at Queens' College, he had 'several negroes resident with me from time to time' – students, such as Alexander Crummell, who had never displayed 'any inferiority of natural ability'. The

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prevalence of such prejudicial views in Cambridge, however, can be inferred from Professor James Scholefield, who, upon hearing the first African Anglican bishop of West Africa Samuel Ajayi Crowther's answers to a series of questions on the philosopher William Paley, planned to read those answers 'to certain of my old Trinity friends' in the fellows common room who had contended that Black people and students do 'not possess a logical faculty'.[41]

Cambridge's members debated the contentious subject of race and racial difference, and that institution's financial interconnection with enslavers remained constant as well. Slave money continued to percolate through the fellowship. Forty years after Britain's five-year occupation of western Saint-Domingue, the Cockburn baronets claimed a yearly pension from the Santo Domingo Board, an effort from the British government to compensate French slavers who had supported its efforts to occupy the island. Inspired by the potential profits from seizing France's richest colony, British soldiers and thousands of German mercenaries had arrived in September 1793 (greeted with 'Long live the English!' by local whites). Falling victim to disease, the government mobilised 7,000 enslaved people for the war effort; still, they did little to dent the revolutionaries' progress under generals André Rigaud and Toussaint Louverture. Sir James Fellowes, a Caian fellow and doctor, accompanied Rear-Admiral Hugh Cloberry Christian's naval contingent, and he there observed the 'melancholy' and 'painful' epidemics of yellow fever that gripped the inhabitants and soldiers. Following the Revolution, the Cockburns enjoyed payments due to Alexander Cockburn's marriage to Yolande Vignier, the daughter of a Saint-Domingue slaveholder. Granted a pension in the 1799 Bounty, their son, Sir Alexander Cockburn, was a fellow at Trinity Hall for more than two decades and a much-respected jurist who would become the 12th Baronet and Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench, where he served on a Royal Commission on international law in relation to fugitive slaves. The family received an annual payment of £130 (and had claimed an indemnity from the French government for their lost estates) between Yolande, Sir Alexander, and their daughter Louisa.[42]

Former enslavers and financial beneficiaries of compensation also subscribed funds for the construction of Cambridge's "New Library" (known at the time as the "Cockerell Building," and now the home of Caius College's library and archive). Built between 1837 and 1840, the benefactors included abolitionists, such as William Whewell and Thomas Spring Rice, and men who earned significant incomes and fortunes from the plantation economy, particularly Lawrence Dundas (who donated £105 and earned £8,135 in compensation), Sir Charles Long, Baron Farnborough (who provided £105 and had inherited a significant Jamaican fortune), the MP Henry Goulburn (who gave £105 and was compensated with £5,601 from the Act), George Neville Grenville (£105 and more than £6,630 in compensation), Adam Sedgwick (with £105 donated and £3,783 awarded as a trustee to a Jamaican plantation), and Sir Nicholas

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Conyngham Tindal (who provided £105 and had been awarded two-thirds of a compensation claim as the trustee of an estate in British Guiana). Abolitionists who had inherited fortunes connected to enslavement, such as the Reverend George Craufurd (who donated £100), contributed to the construction efforts too. Even Charles Robert Cockerell, the architect and building's namesake, drew much of his fortune from his Jamaican plantation-owning relatives. Long after the dissolution of slave-trading companies, men with monetary connections to enslavement supported Cambridge.[43]

Struggling against the enduring wealth, privilege, and power of that enslaver class, Crummell's classics and religious education at Cambridge was an important foundation of his abolitionist thought. Soon after leaving Cambridge, Crummell published (as he often did) as a "BA" of "Queen's College, Cambridge" his *The Negro Race not under a Curse*. Attacking the Curse of Ham myth, which he had seen 'much used by the schools and universities of England', he argued that the 'severities' of the slave trade and the 'horrors' of the plantation were not Biblical, but 'entirely *modern* – confined to a short period in the history of the world, and therefore not a true exemplification of the *general* condition of the Negro race'. A student of history, Crummell noted that Europeans had first 'enslaved and overworked' Native Americans – and once they had been 'exterminated, the Negro was torn from his native land, brought across the water, and made to supply the red man's place'. Turning proslavery arguments against their proponents (enslavers had dismissed criticisms of enslavement by claiming its longstanding roots in history), he observed that the 'whole human family', including Anglo-Saxons, had participated in and enslaved each other, but he noted that the 'Negro family' had suffered 'greatly' for 'some high and important ends.' The New Yorker's education in Greek, Roman, and Hebrew texts refuted proslavery ideologues like John C. Calhoun, the Vice-President, who had reportedly claimed at a Washington party that only when 'a Negro who knew the Greek syntax' existed would he 'believe that the Negro was a human being and should be treated as a man'.[44]

Joining Thomas Clarkson and Frederick Douglass, who also deployed classical examples in their antislavery arguments, Crummell used his education in Euclid, Plato's *Apology* and *Crito*, and Tacitus to shape Britain's perception of West Africa. 'The very words in which Cicero and Tacitus describe the home and families of the Germanic tribes', he argued, 'can truly be ascribed to the people of the West Coast of Africa'. These venerable moral traits included their 'maidenly virtue, the instinct to chastity, is a marvel… in West Africa every female is a virgin to the day of her marriage'. He contrasted this 'generalization' of African virtue with a corrupted Europe: 'The harlot class', he wrote, 'is unknown in all the tribes. I venture the assertation that any one walking through Pall Mall, London, or Broadway, New York, for a week would see more indecency in look and act than he could discover in an African town in a dozen years'. Upon meeting newly liberated Africans in Liberia, he lamented that these virtuous people – 'fresh from the plantations' – had had their spirits

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crushed, 'their inner life, is gone' – 'And only shreds – the wreck of humanity remains to be seen, and to have one's heart broken when seen'. Crummell argued that Africans, not white Europeans, occupied the moral high ground.[45]

W. E. B. Du Bois, a fellow Pan-Africanist and intellectual, lauded Crummell as a prophet and mentor, and the latter's writings had a profound influence on African diasporic thought. After leaving Cambridge, Crummell relocated to Liberia to work with the Protestant Episcopal Church. Arriving in 1853, he came ashore at a time when Liberia's free American Black population, who had relocated there with the support of the American Colonisation Society, had seized control. Whilst Crummell was initially opposed to colonisation, he called for Black Americans to civilise Africans. In his 1862 work *The Future of Africa*, he wrote that the 'children of Africa' in America had first 'been called, in the Divine providence, to meet the demands of civilization, of commerce, and of nationality' and second to perform the 'solemn responsibility of establishing the Christian faith amid the rude forms of paganism'. Unlike white imperialists, whether from the United States or Britain, Crummell dreamed that Liberia would be a safe haven for African-descended peoples, not a location to export Black people and thereby stop slave insurrections. He called the Colony a 'refuge of the oppressed' – a land where, quoting a poet, there would be 'No slave-hunt in our borders, no pirate on our strand, No fetters in Liberia, no slave upon our land!' That nation would carry on the civilisation of Europe, he thought, without the miseries and barbarities perpetuated in European states and colonies, such as enslavement. Many whites believed that colonisation was the only avenue to forestall a race war, but Crummell became a convert to colonisation to create what he thought was a better future for West Africa.[46]

Unfortunately for Crummell, he would not witness this new world. Fearing his life was in danger after the President of Liberia was assassinated, Crummell returned to the United States and became the rector at St Luke's in Washington, D.C., and taught at Howard University, a Black college, from 1895 to 1897. There he continued to advocate for the Republic of Liberia. In the preface to his *Africa and America*, a collection of his essays, sermons, and speeches, Crummell defended Liberia from the charge that it had revealed 'the incapacity of the Negro Race for free government!' or that 'Liberia is a failure!' Contrary to that prejudiced and pessimistic charge from white Americans, he considered the Republic to be 'one of the marvels of modern history! Yea but little short of a miracle!' One area where Crummell was pessimistic – correctly, as it turned out – was in the prospect for colour-blind democracy in the US. Crummell declared that it was the 'nation which was on trial' – and that the problem of race was the problem of democracy, and without equality the nation would collapse because 'her every fundamental dogma' was based upon racial injustice. Though he passed away ten years after this address, Crummell perceptively noted that emancipation was but a small step in breaching the divide between

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white Americans and African Americans, who remained stripped of their civil and democratic rights in the nation they had helped to build.[47]

Following Crummell's death, the University of Cambridge's association with Africa continued. In fact, the centenery of the abolition of the slave trade in 1907 opened with a *Times* article hoping for the 'names and addresses' of Wilberforce's descendants, and those 'English friends who are interested in Africa from an evangelical standpoint, and Africans, Afro-Americans, and black West Indians now in the United Kingdom'. Building on the efforts of the Cambridge Bible Association, which (with the express involvement of Professor Scholefield and other Cambridge members) had planned forty years earlier to send a New Testament to every freed African, Trinity College hosted a meeting of the "Universities' Mission to Central Africa."[48]

With the Master holding the chair, the members hoped to build upon David Livingstone's address to Cambridge in 1857. The missionary, explorer, and abolitionist had called upon undergraduates to join him and 'go back to Africa to try and make an open path for commerce and Christianity'. Flying the banner of Christianity and commerce, Livingstone planned to open Africa's fertile soil to Christian commerce – arguing that the land was 'admirably fitted' for a 'rich harvest' in cotton, sugar, and coffee for prospective colonists. Joining adherents from Oxford and Cambridge, these men hoped to go forth 'as the soldiers of Christianity were also soldiers of that civilization which was the highest honour of every western nation'. The new colonists in Africa included Joseph Gedge, a Caius alumnus and doctor, who accompanied Sir Samuel Baker's Egyptian Exhibition to suppress the slave trade, and later donated £1,000 to fund a Professorship in Physiology. The London Hausa Association also offered Cambridge £100 per annum for a Lectureship in the Hausa language of Nigeria, which 'ranks by the side of Arabic and Suaheli as one of the three most important languages for the development of Africa, and especially that part of it which lies within the British sphere of influence on the West Coast'. For the Association, there was little doubt that a Cambridge education in languages would spur economic and moral development in West and Central Africa. If soft power was unsuccessful, then visiting lecturers and recent graduates of the University advocated the 'annexation' of countries through military power to ensure the gradual termination of enslavement.[49]

From its inception, the Mission envisioned a commercial project in Central Africa as an avenue to end American slavery and make restitution for European colonialism. The UCMA's members, at a meeting in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre in May 1859, feted the participation of Cambridge, Dublin, Durham, and Oxford universities in introducing a more "civilised," Christian commerce to Africa. Celebrating Africa's heritage in theology, philosophy, and literature (perhaps no better encapsulated than in the 'heavenly [Saint] Augustine'), the Reverend Selwyn, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, argued that the Mission had a responsibility to 'give the people freedom' and

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ensure that West Africans would not glide 'slowly to the grave in ignorance and unbelief'. The twin pillars of *Christianity* and *commerce* were an article of faith for Selwyn and his Oxford contemporaries, who thought that '20 millions of [slave compensation] money' did not 'wipe off the stain' of Britain's trading empire.[50]

From a potential base of operations in the Cape Colony, one attendee hoped that the 'great national debt' owed to Africa and its inhabitants could be paid and repaired through the 'opening' of Central Africa to 'free and legitimate commerce' and the abolition of the East African slave trade, which transported 20,000 captives annually. The cotton trade was discussed, too, because that market underpinned 'slavery now in America', and the cultivation of that fibre in Africa would 'cut away the second of these great evils, the existence of slavery in the Southern States of America'. African abolition and American antislavery were two pillars of this Anglican Church project. As in the Caribbean, the concern was to what extent these white humanitarians involved Africans in their plans or, as Crummell envisioned, allowed for the prospect of West African self-government in their homelands.[51]

During the American Civil War, Britain and Cambridge's divisions on the issue of American slavery became apparent. From the outbreak of the conflict, Britons recognised that the contest in North America – whether they supported the Union under President Abraham Lincoln or the Confederate States of America under Jefferson Davis – was over enslavement. In his "Cornerstone Speech," delivered at the Atheneum in Savannah, Georgia, on 21 March 1861, Alexander H. Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, proposed that the rebel nation's 'foundations are laid… upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior [white] race – is his natural condition'. That 'great physical, philosophical, and moral truth' was the foundation of their white supremacist government. Cambridge newspapers soon informed domestic readers about American politics, and a May 1861 paper advertised a 'Tinted Map of the United States', containing 'a Map of the United and Confederates States of North America, printed in colour, distinguishing the Free from the Slaves States, and giving the boundaries of every State and Territory'. As seven Southern states seceded from the Union after Lincoln's election – South Carolina first, then Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas – town and gown residents recognised that enslavement and its expansion was the 'immediate cause' of the Civil War.[52]

Many British elites took up the mantle of defending the Confederacy from charges of rebellion at home and in the United States. These views pervaded every part of Cambridge life, from the lecture hall to clubs and societies and into the wider public sphere, where alumni and dons fought Unionist opinion. An unknown correspondent recounted these views in a November 1863 edition

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of the *Christian Examiner*. Noting that Britons were largely pro-Union, the observer worried that the Confederacy's influence 'is nowhere greater than in the Universities'. Struggling to 'account for this overmastering influence', the writer attributed pro-Confederate opinion in Cambridge to excessive reading of *The Times* newspaper (an 'anti-abolitionist' paper that tended to favour the South), but there were deeper feelings at play than devotion to a London newspaper. Observing a Union Debate, he wrote that, whilst no speaker defended slavery, the 'object of all [speakers] on the Southern side was to prove that slavery had nothing to do with Secession; that the South had seceded because of protective tariffs; that the negro was hated more and treated worse in the North than in the South[.]' The pro-Confederate Cambridge students argued that the North was fighting to 'keep slavery *in* the Union' while the 'South were fighting to take it *out*'. Consequently, the 'triumph of the South' made 'emancipation much more probable than it would be in any other event'. The author found this swing in academic opinion – a shift in allegiance towards those 'gallantly fighting for their independence' – disturbing considering that the Cambridge Union had voted ten years prior that the 'immediate abolition of slavery in the United States is right, practicable, and politic' (despite some members hoping for a period of apprenticeship for 'education'). That measure had been unanimously agreed upon 'by all hands'.[53]

The Cambridge Union records, whilst light on the debates' contents, reveal that the Civil War's origins and morality were a point of contention throughout the conflict. Most of the debates ended with majority support for the South. A narrow majority of Union participants saw no cause for 'regret' that the United States was breaking apart in the first place. At the beginning of the war in December 1861, V. W. Hutton of Trinity moved, and the House agreed with a resounding 54 votes to 5, 'That the seizure of Messrs Slidell and Mason by the American Ship Jacinta [*San Jacinto*] was a breach of international law and demands immediate reparation'. (The "seizure" in question was the Union arrest of two Confederate envoys aboard a British mail steamer, causing an international incident before Lincoln intervened and freed the men.) In the new year, pro-Union motions were defeated with convincing margins. In the first debate of 1862, one brave undergraduate moved (and was defeated 117 to 33) 'That the Cause of the Northern States of America is the Cause of Humanity and progress: and that the widespread sympathy for the Confederates, is the result of ignorance & misrepresentation'. In the final year of the conflict, a Trinity Hall undergraduate proposed the motion (and was once again rejected 76 to 29) 'That this House would view with regret the Success of the Confederates in the present American War as a fatal blow to the cause of Freedom and to the Stability of all Government'. In all, the Cambridge Union debated at least ten Civil War and Reconstruction motions, and each of the votes came down on the side of the Confederacy or anti-Black policies.[54]

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Cambridge fellows were divided on the Civil War, with some supportive of the Confederacy. Charles Kingsley, the Regius Professor of History, was the most prominent of the pro-Southern Cambridge men. Educated at Magdalene, Kingsley was descended from slaveholders (his grandfather, according to Kingsley, had married a 'West Indian heiress'). As he reminisced in 1857, the results of emancipation were not 'encouraging' as it 'regarded the material conditions of the islands'. Still, his enslaver background, Kingsley thought, made him sensitive to the claims of 'our Southern planters, and how it tended to close their ears to all antislavery argument'. (He lamented how his family had been 'ruined' after the financial loss of their Caribbean plantation.) Kingsley's attitude to enslavement, then, was shaped by his family's bitter experience of emancipation, and his resulting belief that slavery's most unjust features were not in its treatment of Black enslaved persons, but rather how it degraded white society by making enslavers less industrious, prone to leisure, and despotic. The belief that whites suffered more from enslavement than Black people was a common one at the time. The Confederate General Robert E. Lee, in a December 1856 letter, noted that African American slavery was 'a greater evil to the white man to the black race' because the 'painful discipline they [African Americans] are undergoing, is necessary for their instruction as a race, & I hope will prepare and lead them to better things'. Some historians have been unable to understand Kingsley's pro-Confederate beliefs given his abolitionism either. Many conservatives had no love for enslavement; nevertheless, British elites, even men like Kingsley who were friends to working-class education, supported the South because of a shared sense of heritage between the landed southern planters and the English aristocracy, and a collective anxiety in Victorian Britain of threats from below – from democratic movements and expanding manhood suffrage.[55]

In May 1860, the Lord Palmerston, the then-prime minister, nominated Kingsley to the Regius Professorship. Often dismissed as a political appointment, the Professorship was one available avenue to reward friends and supporters of the ruling government, and, as a result, had few required qualifications. A first in classics and a professed willingness to devote oneself to modern history was a must. Reading his oeuvre, Kingsley was one of the most underqualified candidates in the Professorship's history. His reputation was based on numerous novels such as *Yeast*, *Alton Locke*, *Hypatia*, *Westward Ho!*, and *Two Years Ago*. *Alton Locke* provided the inspiration for some authors, such as John C. Cobden, in their arguments against 'White Slavery' and the 'slavery of the workmen' in Britain, but the latter novel, *Two Years Ago*, outlined his views on the United States and the politics of African American enslavement.[56]

Though the previously mentioned correspondent who attended the Cambridge Union debates read *Two Years* as a work of abolitionism, Kingsley's views were more complicated. He was an advocate for the Free-Soil Party, a

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short-lived coalition that opposed the expansion of slavery into the western states and which later merged with the Republican Party. In Kingsley's novel, a moderate New Englander argues in dialogue with an Englishmen to 'Leave us to draw a *cordon sanitaire* round the tainted States, and leave the system [slavery] to die a natural death, as it rapidly will if it be prevented from enlarging its field'. The fictional American maintained that enslavement would eventually end with the march of human progress. Echoing proslavery activists, Kingsley cast abolitionists in the novel as 'too-benevolent philanthropists' whose policies would lead to the 'disruption of the Union, an invasion of the South by the North; and an internecine war, aggravated by the horrors of a general rising of the slaves, and such scenes as Hayti beheld sixty years ago'. The spectre of Haiti and an enslaved uprising, for Kingsley, were to be more dreaded than the most violent civil war.[57]

Kingsley's encouragement of the South was also born out of his strident anti-Americanism and avowed belief in Teutonic white supremacy. Like many elite Britons, Kingsley considered Southerners to be white, genteel, quasi-English aristocrats compared to the "melting pot" of "Yankees" in the north. For him, races were endowed with specific characteristics that were expressed over time in a nation's history and character. If whites were members of the 'family of Teutonic races', the opposite was true for 'negros', 'Turks', and 'Celts' (the latter of whom he derided as 'human chimpanzees'). Far from oppose the Civil War, Kingsley wrote to a friend in 1862 that it 'will be a gain to us, that the rapacity and insolence of these men [Americans] must be sternly checked'. Britons' arrogance attitude toward the United States, it appears, had not abated since the Declaration of Independence. Writing to his brother, Henry, that year, Kingsley went further, arguing that the war was 'a blessing for the whole world by breaking up an insolent and aggressive republic of rogues, and a blessing to the poor niggers, because the South once seceded, will be amenable to the public opinion of England, and also will, from very fear, be forced to treat its niggers better'. The South, for Kingsley, was an avenging force of white "Anglo-Saxons" struggling against a combustible, multicultural coalition of Irish Americans, German Americans, and African Americans – many of whom, he surmised, 'know not why' they fought. Kingsley was obsessed with "nobility" (a term that he used for any cause or person which he deemed respectable), and his romanticisation of the agrarian, aristocratic, "noble" South, and its struggle against the industrial, polyglot might of the North permeated his writings.[58]

The apotheosis of Kingsley's pro-Southern beliefs were his Cambridge lecture series. The first series were titled the *Roman and the Teuton*. Published in 1864, these lectures on the decline of Rome and its lessons for the present were delivered at the university four years prior in Michaelmas 1860. The lectures compared Roman with American slavery, arguing that the former was 'not to be described by the pen of an Englishmen', and that it filled him with 'sorrow' for people who compared them with 'Southern slaveholders'. 'God forbid!',

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Kingsley denounced, 'Whatsoever may have been the sins of a Southern gentleman, he is at least a Teuton, and not a Roman'. As for the fall of the Goths, who had conquered the Romans, Kingsley ascribed their decline from greatness to the weaknesses inherent to slavery: they had no 'middle class' and found themselves 'a small army of gentlemen, chivalrous and valiant, as slaveholders of our race have always been; but lessening day by day from battle and disease' and the replacement of their numbers with 'helpless, unarmed, degraded' enslaved persons who 'must eat though their masters starve'. He blamed the empire's collapse on the enslaved, who had weakened the economy, culture, and society of their white masters whilst providing limited military support in return.[59]

Following these lectures, Kingsley's well-attended courses on the United States and the "Limits and Exact Science applied to History" addressed contemporaneous events. To Kingsley, the 'American question' was imperative – he considered it impossible to 'be a Professor of past Modern History without the most careful study of the history which is enacting itself around me' – a war that, he thought, 'will be a gain to us [Britain]'. Addressing a captive audience of 100 undergraduates, he discussed the 'future of that unique country'. The observer hoped that Kingsley would stem the tide of British pro-Southern opinion. However, according to Kingsley, the 'North herself ought to have broken up the Union in 1850, at the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law'. The South was not the aggressor. Rather, he claimed that 'any resistance, any [Union] effort even to recover the lost ground [in the South], was positively wrong' and that the South therefore had a 'moral right' to secede, and 'the whole guilt of the struggle rested upon the North'. 'Even for the interests of the negro himself', he claimed, 'it was better to yield, as there was at least a chance of rescuing some of the Territories from slavery by peaceful emigration, while the country and humanity would alike have been spared all these torrents of blood!'[60]

The lectures condemned abolitionists for 'going headlong into war' – a conflict that was 'a worse evil than all the slavery which ever existed since the world began'. Pleading for the 'fair judgment' and 'impartial hearing, on behalf of the slaveholders in the South', Kingsley concluded that 'the applause of the world was ready for the Confederates, if they would commence the work of emancipation. They had already taken a step in the right direction, by solemnly prohibiting the reopening of the slave-trade at the very commencement of their political existence!' The United States was not, in his eyes, destined to be one nation, but rather four 'great empires' of which the 'Southern Confederacy' was one. The students greeted these controversial arguments with rapturous applause. They 'cheered every word' in favour of the Confederacy and another observer wrote that 'Man after man comes here [from Eton] delighted with Kingsley'. Frances Kingsley, his wife, recollected that as the lectures concluded, the class erupted into cheers and the Professor 'almost sobbed as he sat down amidst the storm [of applause]'.[61]

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Kingsley further publicised these pro-Confederate comments. Amidst an economic depression in Britain, the Regius Professor took a stand against the cotton barons who blamed the Civil War for the crisis of overproduction, as industrialists imported more cotton in the boom years than could be sold. By the beginning of the conflict, 77 per cent of cotton consumed in the United Kingdom had been shipped from the United States, including the Confederate ports of New Orleans and Charleston. With Union ships blockading the South, six per cent of British cotton factories had closed after a year of war. Kingsley, a Christian socialist who argued that capitalism was the root of much vice, blamed industrialists for the crisis. These 'very Lancashire men', he claimed in a letter to *The Times*'s editor, 'have directly helped to cause the present distress and the present war, by their determination to use exclusively slave-grown cotton; developing thereby, alike slavery itself, and the political power of the slave owners'. Even as he cautioned his students to sympathise with Confederate slaveholders, he recognised that Britain had become a pawn of the "slave power" through its reliance on enslaved-produced cotton. Utilising his contacts, Kingsley also implored a Manchester millowner to stop concealing 'the broad fact, that the present distress came not merely from the American war, but from the overproduction of the last few years, and must have happened, more or less, in any case'. These issues, he noted, were akin to the crimes that the industry had inflicted on the white working family. As children earned wages 'too nearly equal' to their parents, they were encouraged to become 'independent' – another sign that 'mill-labour effeminates the men' through making them profligate in their spending (or so he speculated). In contrast to the drudgery of industry, Kingsley wanted all men to 'emigrate… because the life of a colonist would, by calling out the whole man, raise them in body and mind enormously'. To him, the muscular Christian colonist was a model for British men.[62]

Kingsley's interest in the Americas did not end following his lectures. In 1865, Paul Bogle, an activist and preacher, arrived in front of a Morant Bay courthouse, with hundreds of fellow Jamaicans at his back protesting poverty, racism, and injustice – the legacies of enslavement. Without warning, the volunteer milita fired into the crowd, killing seven and triggering a revolt against white rule. The Governor Edward John Eyre declared martial law, resulting in the murder of 400 Jamaicans and the arrest of 300 others on trumped-up charges, including Bogle (who was later executed). For the prosecution, the philosopher John Stuart Mill and other Britons denounced Eyre and established a Jamaica Committee to investigate his crimes and call for his prosecution. For the defense, Kingsley and John Ruskin, a polymath who gave the inaugural lecture at the Cambridge School of Art (now Anglia Ruskin University) and philanthropist who provided twenty-five Turner portraits to the Fitzwilliam Museum, sided with the former governor and supported Thomas Carlyle's Eyre Defence Fund. Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, too, sent a letter to *The*

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Times, denouncing the prosecution (or persecution, as he saw it) of Eyre, a 'distinguished friend'. Murchison, an eminent geologist and founder of the Murchison chair at Edinburgh University, was the nephew and legatee of William McKenzie of Saint Vincent, who owned the plantation "Tourama" with 385 enslaved workers. He inherited around £4,000 from the will after significant litigation.[63]

The continued support at Cambridge for the planters may appear strange given the abolitionist context, but it bears remembering that plantation regimes were expanding across the British Empire. Few men illustrate the empire's ebullition in coerced labour better than the anthropologist Henry Ling Roth, whose name adorns a research fund at the Cambridge School of Anthropology. Roth was well-travelled, having worked for six months in his youth on sugar plantations in British Guiana, at the heart of an immigrant indenture-based economy that one former justice of the colony, Joseph Beaumont, labelled 'a new slavery' – a 'monstrous, rotten system, rooted upon slavery, grown in its stale soil, emulating its worst abuses'. The fellow George Holmes Blakesley of King's, alongside Beaumont and the Anti-Slavery Society, soon met to debate measures to end the 'dangerous probability of a revival of the worst features of slavery, under the cloak of free and untrammelled industry'. Even a century after abolition, labourers recognised that indentureship was 'a form of forced labour'. Plantation labourers remembered that they had 'to run with the cane like a thief in the night'. One declared that he had seen people drop dead from 'exhaustion', and another labourer argued that the 'Estate Authorities like to have illiterate children to be stooges all the time, and to press them into doing what they want them to do'. Labourers, working for white elites (including Cambridge graduates), understood the means and ends of this coercive system: 'If you live on the estate', commented one man, 'you have to serve the estate and suit the Management. If they order you and say you should go about, you have to do it'. Racial enslavement had been reconstituted through indentureship, with workers trapped in cycles of abuse and economic exploitation.[64]

Following his experience in one coerced labour regime, Roth journeyed to other coerced labour economies. First, he travelled to the Russian Empire, where he observed the 'demoralising influence' of the emancipation of the serfs on the banking and landowning classes. By 1878, Roth had settled in Mackay, Queensland – one of Australia's most productive sugar-growing regions, which was worked in large measure by South Sea islanders, who were denigrated as "Kanakas." Around 63,000 labourers were brought to Australia between 1868 and 1906 in conditions that resembled enslavement, with exploitative traders kidnapping or tricking islanders to board vessels bound for the Australian plantations. There, the labourers were treated more akin to 'prison gangs' than 'free workers', with an average daily yield at one mill of forty tonnes. White racialized violence was common – and the newspapers acted as cheerleaders, stirring

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fears that the labourers had a crime rate more than two times the white population (with newspapermen dubbing Mackay a 'Murder Metropolis'). Roth, who English investors had contracted to investigate the industry, published a much-publicised report on sugar in 1880, and two papers on the climate in Mackay and the roots of the sugar cane. Living on Foulden plantation, Roth was an active member of the Mackay Planters and Farmers Association and defended the civilising potential of the region's coerced labour system. In a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Roth attacked a British author who had denounced whites for transforming the South Seas from a 'paradise' into a 'pandemonium'. Roth claimed that death rates amongst labourers were equal to whites, they had access to hospitals for medical care and could claim redress for injuries in courts, and the 'savage life' was no 'paradise' – in fact, the planters had 'saved' their workers from 'disgusting customs – infanticide, orgies, and other abominations unknown to the cultured nations'. Brought to Queensland to 'labor for the general welfare of the civilised world', he defended the planters' reprisals because the labourers' 'vile island habits are not tolerated on the plantations'. Roth, whose son, George Kingsley, became a Fijian colonial administrator, was proof that the plantation system had not regressed after emancipation.[65]

In Cambridge, Kingsley worked with a wealthy descendent of slave-traders to fund an American history professorship. Henry Yates Thompson, a Trinity undergraduate at the start of the Civil War, was the son of Samuel Henry Thompson, a millionaire Liverpool financier, and Elizabeth Yates, the eldest daughter of Joseph Brooks Yates, a Jamaican plantation owner, trader in enslaved persons, and merchant. Samuel Thompson was a long-term partner in Heywood & Co. (a predecessor of Barclays), a firm 'experienced in the African trade'. Frustrated with 'the general ignorance of America among Englishmen', Thompson, who lectured in England on the Civil War and was a fervent abolitionist, offered an endowment of $6,000 in American bonds to fund the post in October 1865, with the interest funding a lecturer every two years. (Supporting, in essence, a forerunner to the current Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions.) His plan to 'improve Anglo-American understanding' did not fail – on a vote of 110 to 82 – because of Thompson's economic connections, but in part because of Cambridge arrogance, with one fellow commenting that to accept Thompson's fortune would 'cast a slur upon our selves, and pander to that which is perhaps the worst vice inherent in the North-American character – namely – self-conceit'.[66]

Cambridge was still willing decades after this incident to beg for Thompson's earned and inherited riches, however. In 1907, Ernest Stewart Roberts, the Vice-Chancellor, made another offer to Thompson, which he politely refused, instead donating to Harrow and providing funding and manuscripts to Newnham College's library (Cambridge's first women's college), which was named in his honour. His donation was another example of Cambridge's financial connections to enslavement, as women's colleges earned money from both

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abolitionists and individuals with familial connections to slaveholding. The reformist Emily Davies, who founded Girton College in 1869, opposed slave-grown cotton but had some doubts as to whether rights could be seized by force. On enslavement, she commented to one interlocutor that Black 'freedom should be restored by the people who have stolen it' (namely the enslaver class) rather than 'extorted' via an 'insurrection of the slaves'. On the other hand, Jane Catherine Gamble, whose bequest funded buildings, land purchases, and helped discharge Girton's debts, was excluded from her father's significant fortune in Floridian plantations (which she blamed on her stepmother), but she gained properties, $50,000 in Virginia state bonds, and twenty-six shares in the slavery-linked Upper Appomattox Canal Company thanks to her maternal uncle and aunt, Nancy and James Dunlop.[67]

Aside from Kingsley and Davies, there were other Cambridge men and women who dwelled on the causes and consequences of the American Civil War. Over the course of 1863, John Jermyn Cowell, a Trinity graduate, and member of the Cambridge Apostles debating society, tried to convince Henry Sidgwick, the Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy, co-founder of Newnham College, and member of the Apostles debating society, to side with the Confederate States. (Cowell was also a benefactor to the Southern Prisoners' Relief Fund, which aimed to publicise the conditions of Confederate prisoners.) Writing from the Royal Hotel in Kent on 15 September 1863, Cowell reflected 'on our difference of view as to the invasion and devastation of the Southern States'. Labelling the Civil War as a 'war of invasion', Cowell challenged Sidgwick's assumptions: first, that the rebel states were not sovereign and therefore unable to secede and, second, that it was 'Moral to Make War upon a People because it will not abolish slavery'. Cowell refuted the sovereignty question using the American Constitution, but he spent more time pondering the problem of slavery. Cowell, like Kingsley, argued that slavery 'injures the general prosperity of both masters & slaves, and of all communities related to them'. Nevertheless, a 'sudden liberation', he continued, 'demoralizes the slaves, who are unaccustomed to independent action, and their industry comes to an end'. Denouncing Lincoln, he argued that a 'sudden military emancipation' would result in untold misery for the white population, whereas the policy of Brazil in 'improving the condition of her slaves, and paving the way for emancipation 50 years hence' was preferable. Sidgwick's answer to this letter does not exist; still, the philosopher's biographer, Bart Schulz, argues that Cowell had 'softened' Sidgwick's position toward the South's right to secede from the Union (despite the Cambridge professor applauding the 'triumph of the Federal Cause' in a later letter to his mother). Jermyn Cowell lived to witness the fall of Richmond and the Confederacy's defeat, passing away two years later in 1867.[68]

Determined to make a stand against the Cambridge pro-Confederates, the Harvard and Trinity College graduate William Everett, the son of the American diplomat and former Secretary of State, Edward Everett, promoted

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the Union's cause and denounced the aristocratic students who supported the South. Reflecting on this divisive period, Everett's friends mentioned that his 'eloquence' was often 'fired by his patriotism' as when he gave an 'extemporised panegyric' about George Washington in the College Chapel. Standing before the Cambridge Union as its President, in the middle of a speech defending the Union in the Civil War, Everett also dramatically 'flung open his overcoat, and displayed a tie flaming with the stars and stripes'. Following University, Everett returned to Harvard and completed his law degree at the end of the Civil War in 1865, later taking up a teaching position there in 1870. Upon his return to the US, Everett lectured about his Cambridge experiences, titled *On the Cam*. Published whilst completing his legal training, the twelfth lecture elaborated on the "Relations of Cambridge, England, to America."[69]

Everett betrayed his frustration at how Americans were viewed in Cambridge, arguing that the 'question of slavery makes very little difference'. English elites, he complained, 'prefer the South' because enslavers 'are country gentlemen, with some notion of aristocracy and the predominance of the landed interest'. The real friends of America, according to Everett, were not the 'governing class' who he thought dominated Cambridge, but rather the manufacturing and literary classes. As it turned out, Everett had similar hopes for white domination as his Southern counterparts. As his lectures concluded, Everett hoped – echoing Kingsley's call for a Teutonic race – for the 'whole English race', including America and Britain, to unite in a special relationship.[70]

Outside the University's limits, prominent Cambridge alumni lobbied for the Confederacy as it desperately struggled to achieve diplomatic recognition in Europe. John Jermyn's father, John Welsford Cowell, was one such figure. The son of a London merchant and a former trustee for Jamaican plantation owners, Cowell matriculated at Trinity as a pensioner in 1814, graduating four years later. After his studies, Cowell was a founding member of the Political Economy Club, which supported free trade (and included supporters of the Caribbean enslaver class), and joined the Bank of England, successively working in its Bristol and Gloucester branches before travelling to the US in 1837 to manage the Bank's assets after numerous American financial firms collapsed in the wake of that year's speculative panics. There he met with John C. Calhoun, the former Vice President, ardent sectionalist, and slaveholder. After meeting Calhoun, who argued that slavery was a 'positive good' – a means of self-improvement for enslaved African Americans – Cowell became an ardent public supporter of the 'Cotton States'. As he later wrote, the 'communications of that eminent Statesman' had helped him 'understand how, in the fullness of time, their secession was an unavoidable necessity which nothing on earth could possibly prevent'.[71]

The involvement of bankers and financiers in arguing for the Confederate cause, it should be noted, was not unusual. Sir David Salomons, the Alderman of London and Parliamentarian who invested much of his political capital into

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supporting Jewish emancipation, was a supporter of the Confederacy whilst in Parliament and donated to a fund established to build a monument to the Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson, who had become famed for his stone-walled resistance to a Union charge at the First Battle of Bull-Run (the first engagement of the conflict) but had then, two years later, become a victim to friendly fire on 10 May 1863.[72]

The bank that Salomons had helped to found, London and Westminster (a forerunner of NatWest), helped to finance Britain's imperial interests. On 22 October 1857, at the height of India's rebellion against British rule, the firm loaned half a million pounds to the ruling EIC for two years at ten per cent of the security of East India bonds, adding to a substantial investment that the bank held in East Indian Railway bonds. (Cambridge colleges continued to hold similar securities, with Benjamin Hall Kennedy's 1865 benefaction for the establishment of the Kennedy Professorship of Latin partly funded with £3,745 in East India bonds, and Trinity Hall owning £2,296 in India securities to fund building works and a repair fund.) Salomons was so involved in the Bank at this time that his non-attendance at a shareholder meeting in 1867 had to be explained. The East India loan was controversial amongst some careful bank investors, with one asking the board, 'on what principle so large an amount of money had been lent to the East India Company at a time when it looked as if India must fall from our grasp?' Fortunately for the Bank, the independence struggle failed, with estimates of Indian deaths in the conflict perhaps numbering 800,000. Salomons bequeathed his money and baronetcy to his nephew, David Lionel Salomons, who endowed the Salomons' Lectureship in Russian at Cambridge and generously provided £5,000 to his alma mater, Caius, for a new building site, £5,000 for construction purposes, and an engineering scholarship.[73]

As for Cowell, he continued with the Bank for two years, before turning his attention to financial activities in another hemisphere: New Zealand. Like many enterprising Britons who helped to establish the Canterbury Association in 1848 (which intended to establish a colony), Cowell facilitated colonisation efforts there. Directed by Earl Grey to assist in resolving disputed land transactions with the Māori, Cowell corresponded with William Wakefield, the New Zealand Company's principal agent in Wellington. Whilst involved in these affairs from afar, Cowell participated in a land purchase in Otago from the Māori, and he ensured that the Company had 'full and correct statistical information' on colonial settlements in Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson.[74]

Following his retirement and the outbreak of the Civil War, Cowell grew in stature from a retired civil servant to a Confederate lobbyist. Funded by Confederate agents, Cowell wrote three tracts in four years in support of the South: *Southern Secession* (1862), *Lancashire's Wrongs and Remedy* (1863), and *France and the Confederate States* (1865). The three pamphlets argued that the South did not secede because of slavery – the South had seceded, Cowell

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maintained, because the North's protectionist policies (namely tariffs) had damaged the plantation economy and helped to precipitate the war. He argued that what Britons knew about slavery 'is supplied to us by your Northern enemies, selected and distorted for the very object of fomenting our aversion to it, and to you [addressing Southerners], as slave-owners'. On slavery, he claimed that the best chance for the 'gradual elevation of that unfortune race to a higher degree of humanity' depended on 'your achieving absolute independence in the South'. In Cowell's telling, the North's protectionism meant that the South was waging a just war of self-defence against the Yankees' 'protectionist army' of 'monopolists' who aimed to throw a 'financial yoke' on their fellow-countrymen and women. The South was, in short, fighting a war of independence.[75]

Cowell compared slaveholders to noble aristocrats. The "cavalier myth," popular on both sides of the Atlantic, maintained that Virginia's aristocratic slaveholders were descended from old English gentlemanly stock who had left England following the execution of Charles I. That myth, which remained influential in the South before, during, and after the Civil War, featured in all of Cowell's writings. Striking fear into his readers with images of an impending race war, the former banker criticised the North for arming the 'black peasantry' to participate in a conflict 'so nefarious, so horrible, that history affords nowhere any parallel to its atrocity'. Cowell juxtaposed that image of Black-imposed terror with the noble, English gentility of the "plantocracy." He asked his readers in his earliest pamphlet, *Southern Secession*: 'What natural connection have you with New England, New York, and Pennsylvania'. Despite the English having colonised New England and Pennsylvania, the first state by the Puritans and the latter by William Penn and the Society of Friends, Cowell described Virginians and Carolinians as 'your proper fellow-countrymen' and he hoped that Englishmen and southern slavers would 'mutually acknowledge each other as such'. Contrasting the "Yankees," whom he denounced (like Kingsley) as an amalgamation of ethnicities, he argued in his writings that the 'noble English spirit' lived on in the South and the 'Cotton Operatives' had raised themselves to a greater degree of 'material comfort, social respectability, and morality' than any class before. These writings reveal the extent to which former enslavers, such as Cowell, had again become active participants in the defense of enslavement decades after emancipation had taken place in the British Caribbean.[76]

The pro-southern partisan Alexander Beresford-Hope, the MP for Maidstone and then Stoke-upon-Trent, had Cambridge roots too. Beresford-Hope was born into a family that had earned a fortune from finance, which included providing loans to plantation owners in St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John in the Danish Caribbean colonies. In time, the Harrow and Trinity alumnus eagerly enlisted his pen – which up till that point had been busy writing on subjects ranging from English Cathedrals to paganism to the Latin language – in service to the Confederate cause. His 1861 work, *A Popular View of the American Civil War*, observed that Southerners should not be blamed for the

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institution of slavery because Americans had 'inherited' that system from their British forbears. Beresford supported his words with actions: he was an active servant for Confederate causes in Britain, providing lectures, lobbying for the South in Parliament, serving on the committee of the Southern Independence Association of London, and he donated £20 to the Jackson Monumental Fund. In 1868, the university elected Beresford-Hope as one of the two men to represent the University of Cambridge constituency – and he joined a distinguished list of representatives for that seat with economic connections to the plantation system, including Henry Goulburn, William John Bankes (1822–1826), and Sir Nicholas Conyngham Tindal (1827–1829).[77]

Beresford-Hope's talents were in pamphleteering, though. Contrary to the more critical view of slavery contained in Harriet Beecher Stowe's bestselling *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Beresford-Hope followed Kingsley, Cowell, and others in claiming that the 'ultra-abolitionists' exaggerated the cruelties of enslavement. Beresford-Hope argued that 'the best of the slaveowners make its chains as light as possible – they educate their blacks, they make them Christians, while in Africa they would have remained untaught and uncivilised'. In contrast, the North had imposed a 'cruel war' and inspired the enslaved 'to massacre and ravish the whites, and devastate the seceding States'. The politician and polemicist argued that the enslaved had remained loyal, however. Parroting the "Black Confederate" myth, the disproven notion that African Americans willingly fought for the Confederacy, he proclaimed that the enslaved 'are actually a right arm of strength to their owner working hard for the very men against whom it was supposed they would be the first to turn their hands'. In a public lecture a year later, Beresford-Hope advocated for a Black colony in South America and argued that enslaved people were unworthy of freedom and equality because they did not have the necessary 'principles of self-dependence' to make their way in the world. Calculated to draw a distinction between the righteous cause of the slaveholders and the Union-supporting abolitionists, Beresford-Hope drew crowds in Britain for his speeches, a reminder that his views were not isolated – whatever William Everett claimed – to British aristocrats.[78]

Henry Hotze, the Swiss-born journalist in charge of the Confederacy's propaganda efforts in Britain, was determined to inspire pro-Southern opinion as well. Born in 1833, Hotze emigrated to the United States and became a naturalised citizen, taking up residence in Mobile, Alabama, in 1855. Hotze's attitudes to race were best expressed in his translation of English Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's tract, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, which argued that whites were intellectually and physically superior to African-descended peoples. Hotze was a dedicated supporter of the Confederacy, too, holding a clerkship in Richmond, Virginia, and L. P. Walker, the Confederate Secretary of War, then ordered him to travel to London and acquire much needed funds for Southern agents and munitions for the war effort. It was there that he realised the Confederacy required a European advocate. To that end, on 14 November

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1861 Hotze was given the important task of influencing British opinion and, with a mere 750 dollars in his pocket from the Confederacy, he tried to capitalise on British anti-Union sentiment. Attempting to prove that support for the Confederacy did not rest on the continuation of the cotton trade, he paid journalists to write favourable columns in the *Morning Post* (a paper supportive of the then-Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston), the *London Standard*, and the *Herald*. In May 1862, Hotze realised that he needed to target opinion leaders more directly – politicians, business leaders, fellows and professors, and clergymen – so he founded *The Index* newspaper.[79]

Hotze employed educated university men to staff *The Index*. As he commented to Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State, hundreds of newspaper articles had to be published to influence public opinion, and that task was best left to talented writers. On that topic, he wrote in February 1864 that he was 'now recruiting upon this same principle among the generation of rising university men, who, within the next 10 years, will give the tone to public opinion in this country'. The strategy was effective because of Cambridge's prominence in Britain's political, social, and cultural establishment, and, perhaps, the university's enduring significance to white abolitionists given that it had educated Peckard, Wilberforce, and Clarkson. The tide of the Civil War may have turned (in July 1863, the Union was victorious at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and had captured Vicksburg, Mississippi, and, with it, the entire Mississippi River), yet Hotze wrote again to Benjamin from Paris in July 1864 to inform him that he wanted 'the Index [to] take deep and permanent root in the great university bodies of this kingdom, not so much with a view to [the] present as to future results upon the public opinion of which these bodies are, so to speak, the subsoil'. Hoping to discuss and promote his 'university idea', Hotze claimed that his 'object' would 'be realized in the course of this month by intimately identifying with the editorial conduct of the Index two gentlemen who combine with a zealous devotion to our principles and our cause the highest academical distinction, well merited popularity and influence, and a social position as honorable in the present as it is promising for the future'. One of the men that he identified was John George Witt, a King's fellow – proving the integral role of universities to the Confederate cause.[80]

The Swiss-born Confederate sympathiser also attempted to influence members of the British scientific establishment. Founded in 1843 as a subsidiary of the Aborigines' Protection Society, the Ethnological Society of London (ESL) provided a forum to debate the origins and nature of human diversity. The ESL had abolitionist and liberal roots founded on a support for Darwinian monogenism, but the organisation split as the speech therapist Dr James Hunt, a Confederate sympathiser, and others were more supportive of polygenism, or the notion that human beings had multiple sources of origin (a distinction often used to scientifically support theories of Black inferiority). The Anthropological Society of London (ASL) was thus born in 1863, and Hotze

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accepted Hunt's invitation to join its fourteen-member council. The ASL lasted eight years and promoted a white supremacist approach to racial science. Hunt's paper on the "Negro's Place in Nature" set the Society's tone on race and slavery. He claimed that scientists could not deny that the 'improvement in mind and body, as well as the general happiness [of the Black population], which is seen in those parts of the world in which the Negro is working in his natural subordination to the European'. For Hunt, the Confederacy had the most developed Black population in the world, and there they were 'able to work with impunity, and [the enslaved] does himself and the world generally much good by his labour'. The speech therapist also repeated the disproved notion that Black people were immune to infectious diseases, including yellow fever – a well-entrenched theory that had long been used to justify racial slavery in the southern states.[81]

Hunt was also a prominent member of the Cannibal Club, which met near Leicester Square, close to the ASL's rooms. These men (the inner sanctum of the Society) 'dined in front of a mace, which represented the ebony head of a negro gnawing the ivory thig-bone of a man'. Thomas Bendyshe, a King's fellow, was a member of both that secretive Club and the ASL, and other Cambridge-affiliated men were members of the Society too: Charles Kingsley, the Reverend William Selwyn, Edward J. Routh (a Peterhouse fellow and famed Tripos mathematics coach), William Stephen Mitchell (then a student at Caius College), the Reverend Joseph Bosworth (who provided £10,000 for a professorship of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge), Thomas George Bonney (a St John's fellow and prominent geologist), and Charles Cardale Babington (Cambridge's chair of botany). Alfred Russell Wallace recognised Bendyshe's talents, and the King's man was an effective publicist for the ASL, publishing an influential translation of Blumenbach's writings (which oversimplified the German's more nuanced ideas on race, introducing the naturalist to English audiences as a supporter of Black racial inferiority), a history of anthropology, and an article on the extinction of races.[82]

Witt, who also appears to have been a member of the ASL's council, devoted an entire chapter of his memoir, *A Life in the Law*, to "America." By America, he meant the South and he commented at length in the book about his relationships with Confederate officials and role with *The Index*. Witt was the crowning jewel in Hotze's appeal for university men. The son of a prosperous Cambridgeshire farmer and barrister, Witt attended Eton as a King's Scholar, becoming Captain of the School, and then matriculated at King's in 1856, winning the Hulsean Prize in 1860, graduated seventh in his class in classics that same year, and held a fellowship for twenty years until 1888. Whilst a student, Witt met Hotze and stated his opinions on the Civil War in a Union debate, arguing that the 'probable separation' of the United States was to be regretted. Witt's unionist instincts appeared to have shifted following southern secession. After graduating and training as a barrister, he entered the Hotze's powerful

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circle of acquaintances at his home in Savile Row, London: officers, merchants, purchasers of stores and ships, journalists, soldiers, managers of confederate loans, and politicians. Witt operated at the heart of the Confederate world in Britain.[83]

Pocketing £300 per annum, Witt became the *Index*'s associate editor in August 1864. His editorial responsibilities were undefined (and there is little evidence that Witt played a significant role in the newspaper's content), but Hotze looked upon him and the executive editor, J. B. Hopkins, as his 'most trusted & beloved ministers' responsible for spreading the 'highest ideal of that Southern civilization which is as yet only in its infancy'. Witt, as he admitted in the memoir, was a willing collaborator of the 'Southern cause'. (One article he authored was a hagiographic poem dedicated to the Confederate general J. E. B. Stuart.) As for Witt's views on slavery, he condemned the Emancipation Proclamation as an illegal act 'which set the slaves free off-hand without adequate preparation by wise education and just laws'. Furthermore, he quipped that Britons did not understand the problem of enslavement. In Britain, he mused that the issue of slavery was viewed in terms of 'property' – a belief which, he thought, was a mistake born of ignorance. Witt recognised that the Confederates regarded slavery as a social and political question: 'Their creed', he claimed, 'was to have a class without civil or political rights, devoted to labour, and there was the negro ready to hand'. In a slave society, the 'white community consisted [of] the governing class, all white men being deemed equal'; still, there was a 'defined line of demarcation across which no trespassers were to be permitted'. It was this 'creed', Witt noted, that had ultimately resulted in the Civil War. Slavery, he recognised, went to the heart of the Confederacy's society and politics – and he defended such a nation predicated on white supremacy.[84]

Witt's pro-Confederate activities continued after the guns fell silent in the American Civil War. After the fall of Richmond, the Confederate capital, on 2 April 1865 and Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House seven days later, former rebels fled to England to avoid prosecution. Witt embraced these men. He remained in contact with Henry Hotze, even as the cause of that man's life crumbled (the latter later died in obscurity in a Swiss village). Aside from Hotze, he was on close terms with several Confederates following the conflict, including Slidell, George Eustis, Jr., Colin J. McRae, General Richard Taylor, Jefferson Davis, and Judah Benjamin. Witt's memoirs are filled with anecdotes about these men. He took Eustis and McRae to dinner with him at King's, and along with General Taylor, a former Louisiana slaveholder and Confederate general, he visited Sandringham and played cards with Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, and the King of Denmark. Witt remarked that he had 'capital fun' with Taylor, whose 'appearance, apart from his prowess, was bound to win many looks of admiration'. Witt's association with Jefferson Davis was no less important. After Davis's release from prison, he met the former Confederate president, invited him to tour Cambridge, and described him as 'a delightful man of

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the most simple manners'. Together with Benjamin, he showed Davis around Eton, met the provost, and took both Confederates on a tour of Windsor Castle and Runnymede, the location for the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 (the liberties of which Witt believed 'are the rich inheritance of our race'). They had a good time all around. 'Now', said Benjamin, 'this is the first time he [Davis] has laughed since the fall of Fort Sumter'.[85]

Judah Benjamin was Witt's most enduring friend from his years serving the Confederacy. Witt recalled that he was the first Englishman to shake Benjamin's hands upon the latter entering the country. They remained firm friends until the Confederate politician's death. Like the other Confederates with whom he socialised, Witt introduced Benjamin to Britain's most illustrious legal figures, including the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, at the Inner Temple. Through this association, Benjamin became a Queen's Counsel 'and then persuaded the Lord Chancellor to grant him a Patent of Precedence under the Great Seal in the Courts of Westminster'. Witt defended and launched Benjamin's career even as the latter faced a federal indictment in Richmond (which was soon quashed) for waging war against the United States. Witt denounced this political charge, arguing in his memoir that 'we can hardly realise the possibility of the Government of the United States taking umbrage at honour being paid to an American citizen'. Respected for generations in the South as a leader of the Confederate cause, Benjamin died in Paris in 1884. On his deathbed, the old Confederate knew that he owed much of the security and success that he had attained following the war to his friend and one of his chosen executors – a Cambridge don.[86]

As British slavery ended in North America and a new era of indentureship began in the Caribbean, Cambridge students and academics remained attentive to the problem of American slavery. Aside from the permanence of racial attitudes, Cambridge's debates surrounding American slavery again reveal the essential role of British fellows as agents of empire. Although Alexander Crummell and Edward Strutt Abdy attacked the basis of African American enslavement, with Crummell in particular pushing for colonisation in West Africa, John George Witt and other prominent Cambridge figures were actively courted by Confederate sympathisers and used their culturally and intellectually respectable positions to become significant agents of white civilisation and empire in the nineteenth century. Cambridge men, as shown in Charles Kingsley's case, were true believers, too, in a southern empire predicated on white supremacy, and were willing promoters in spreading this message both to students and British society, providing Britons with lectures, novels, and pamphlets that sought to transform the image of the American South in the British mind. Slavery's permanence and pre-eminence in British intellectual life – and the continuing role of academics in these practices – would ensure that its accompanying racial mentalities would survive and thrive well into the twentieth century.

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