An American Iliad

The Story of The Civil War

Charles P. Roland

AN AMERICAN ILIAD

THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

Charles P. Roland
University of Kentucky

McGraw-Hill, Inc.
New York St. Louis San Francisco Auckland Bogotá Caracas Hamburg
Lisbon London Madrid Mexico Milan Montreal New Delhi Paris San Juan
São Paulo Singapore Sydney Tokyo Toronto

AN AMERICAN ILIAD
The Story of the Civil War

Copyright © 1991 by McGraw-Hill, Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC DOC 9 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-07-053594-9

This book was set in Palatino by the College Composition Unit
in cooperation with Ruttle Shaw & Wetherill, Inc.
The editors were David Follmer and Tom Holton;
the production supervisor was Kathryn Porzio.
The cover was designed by John Hite.
R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company was printer and binder.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Roland, Charles Pierce, (date).
An American Iliad: the story of the Civil War / Charles P. Roland.
p. 3 cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-07-053594-9
1. United States—History—Civil War, 1861–1865. 2. United States—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Campaigns. I. Title.
E468.R76 1991 90-6168
973.7—dc20

About the Author

Charles P. Roland is an Alumni Professor Emeritus at the University of Kentucky. A native of Tennessee, he holds a B.A. degree from Vanderbilt University and a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. He has served on the faculties of Louisiana State University, Tulane University, and the University of Kentucky. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the South and on the Civil War. These include a history of the Confederacy and a biography of Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston.

Professor Roland's career in American military history has been unusual, if not unique. He fought as an infantry officer in Europe during World War II. He has served as assistant to the chief historian of the United States Army, as the Harold Keith Johnson Visiting Professor of Military History at the United States Army Military History Institute and Army War College, as the Visiting Professor of Military History at the United States Military Academy, and as chairman of the Department of the Army Historical Advisory Committee.

Professor Roland has been president of the Louisiana Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association.

To the memory of Bell Irvin Wiley

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

Preface

Almost three thousand years ago an epic poem, the *Iliad*, by the legendary Greek poet Homer, told the story of the great war between the people of Greece and those of the city of Troy in Asia Minor. It was a story of heroism and sacrifice marred by cruelty and horror. The victory of the Greeks forever changed the course of Western history, and thereby of world history. More than a century ago the American people engaged in a great sectional conflict that reenacted all of the heroism and sacrifice, all of the cruelty and horror, of the Greco-Trojan war. The Union victory in the American Civil War forever changed the course of American history, and thereby of world history.

An American Iliad is a concise but comprehensive history, in narrative form, of the Civil War. The book reflects a synthesis of the major writings on the war, reinforced by my own research and focused through my interpretation. It is not primarily an analytical study of trends, causes and effects, or lessons learned. Instead, as the subtitle indicates, it tells the story of the war. The main emphasis is on the military action, that element which distinguishes war from all other human activities. Accounts of the major political, economic, diplomatic, social, and cultural developments of the epoch are adequately explained, but they are woven into the central narrative in a manner designed to show their role in the war effort itself.

Blended into the narrative are brief biographical and character sketches of the leading civilian and military figures of the war, with stress on the contrast between President Abraham Lincoln of the Union and President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy, and between such generals as Grant and Sherman of the Union and Lee and Jackson of the Confederacy. The book holds that both political leaders and both sets of generals demonstrated remarkable determination and resourcefulness.

But Lincoln ultimately emerged as a superior war leader. This came about through his tenacity of purpose in holding to the goal of preserving the Union while remaining flexible in accepting the emancipation of the slaves as a war aim and in dealing with countless other controversial issues; through his wisdom in appointing a general in chief to provide unity of military command and concert of military action; and through his masterful use of the English language to communicate his goals and methods to the people. Also, despite the unsurpassed boldness and skill displayed by the Confederate generals, the Union authorities eventually were able to develop out of their greater numbers

and material resources, and out of the superior organizational and managerial qualities of the northern society and economy, a more comprehensive and more effectual military strategy.

This study takes particular cognizance of the human and the fortuitous elements in war. It shows both the valor and selflessness and the cowardice and fecklessness of the soldiers. It shows both the brilliance and audacity and the stupidity and indecisiveness of the generals and their subordinate officers. It records the play of chance, uncertainty, and unmanageability in war, those ever-present factors to which the renowned German war philosopher Clausewitz paid special attention. It reveals the civilian side of war, the courage and steadfastness and the weariness, grief, and defeatism of the people at home; how the social and cultural resources of the North and South, as well as their political, economic, and military resources, were mobilized to support their war efforts. It describes the jubilation, struggles, and suffering of the freed blacks in the vicissitudes of early emancipation. It portrays the ugly backwash of war in the wake of invasion, destruction, and disruption in the South.

Finally, the book brings into sharp relief the overarching results of the war. These were the preservation of the Union, the eradication of American chattel slavery, and the conception of the nation as it exists today, a nation dedicated, though haltingly and imperfectly, to the ideals of liberty, equality, and democratic government expressed by Lincoln in his most famous utterance, the Gettysburg Address. The story of the Civil War is the epic story of the American people. It is their Iliad.

I am indebted to many persons for their assistance in the preparation of the present book. I especially wish to thank V. Jacque Voegeli and Carol Reardon for their painstaking reading of the manuscript and their many suggestions for improving it; Paul A. Willis, director of libraries at the University of Kentucky, and the entire library staff, for providing me with the space and services for accomplishing the research and writing; the McGraw-Hill College Division editors and the following outside readers who made numerous corrections and helpful recommendations: Merton L. Dillon, Ohio State University; William E. Gienapp, Harvard University; Daniel E. Sutherland, University of Arkansas–Fayetteville; and Hubert H. Wubben, Oregon State University; Thomas H. Appelton, Jr., for his invaluable help in correcting the page proofs; and Robert C. Hodges for his excellent work in preparing the index. I am forever grateful to my wife, Allie Lee Roland, for her constructive criticism of the manuscript, her patience and unwavering confidence in me, and her constant support of my endeavors.

Charles P. Roland

Contents

	PREFACE	xi
I	*A PARTING OF THE WAYS*	1
II	*THE RESORT TO ARMS*	25
III	*MOBILIZATION AND EARLY CAMPAIGNS*	39
IV	*EMERGING GENERALS AND ESCALATING COMBAT*	67
V	*UNION GOVERNMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND EMANCIPATION*	88
VI	*CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION*	103
VII	*THE STRATEGIC BALANCE*	118
VIII	*THE TURN OF THE TIDE OF BATTLE*	135
IX	*THE CONTEST FOR EUROPEAN FAVOR*	159
X	*MILITARY SUCCESS AND POLITICAL VICTORY*	172
XI	*THE RESURGENT NORTH*	197
XII	*THE BELEAGUERED SOUTH*	215
XIII	*THE UNION TRIUMPHANT*	238
XIV	*REFLECTIONS ON MEN AND MEASURES*	256
	SOURCES	264
	INDEX	272

PHOTOGRAPHS

Jefferson Davis 28
Abraham Lincoln 31
Ulysses S. Grant 60
David G. Farragut 65
Robert E. Lee 71
Confederate Dead Near the Shell-Marked Dunker Church 82
Dead of the First Minnesota Infantry 143
Raphael Semmes 168
Frederick Douglass 203
Ruins of Richmond 252

MAPS

Slave and Free Territories According to the Compromise of 1850 7
Principal Military Campaigns of the Civil War 50
The First Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861 53
The Battle of Shiloh, April 6–7, 1862 62
Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, May–June 1862 71
The Seven Days Battles, June 25–July 1, 1862 73
The Campaign of Second Bull Run, August, 1862 77
The Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862 82
Chancellorsville, May 2–6, 1863 127
The Vicksburg Campaign, Dec. 1862–May 1863 132
Gettysburg, July 1–3, 1863 141
Murfreesboro to Chickamauga, 1863 150
The Battles for Chattanooga, November 24–25, 1863 157
The Wilderness and Spotsylvania, May 5–12, 1864 178
Petersburg, 1864 184
The Campaign for Atlanta, May–July 1864 187

I

A Parting of the Ways

A scene of intense drama was opening in the United States Senate. The date was January 29, 1850; the venerable Whig Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky was on his feet; the chamber and galleries were hushed with anticipation. Renowned as a master of the art of political compromise, Clay had lately come back to the Senate out of retirement in the hope of achieving a settlement that would allay the long-festering passions between the North and the South and keep the country at peace. Thin and pallid from age and illness, but moved by an earnest spirit of patriotism and a keen sense of showmanship, flourishing in his hand a set of resolutions that he trusted would accomplish his object, he spoke.

The sectional impasse had grown out of political, economic, cultural, and social differences that reached back to the very origin of the nation and beyond. Disagreements over interpretations of the Constitution and over the legality of a bank of the United States, federal expenditures for internal improvements, and a protective tariff had created threatening stress lines between the North and the South. But the most persistent and most ominous of the stress lines was that over slavery, an institution that shaped and contributed to all of the sources of tension and added a burning moral and emotional element of its own.

The first great political compromise on this issue, following the adoption of the Constitution—the Missouri Compromise—occurred in 1820 after fierce debate in Congress. Besides admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state to keep the balance, the compromise divided the immense unorganized and largely unsettled region of the Louisiana Purchase along the 36° 30′ line, with slavery prohibited in federal territories north of the line—areas in which governments preliminary to statehood were established but were still under direct federal authority—and allowed in federal territories south of the line.

The forensic clash over the compromise kindled deep fears in certain of the nation's statesmen. From his retirement at Monticello, former President Thomas Jefferson of Virginia wrote, "This momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once the knell

of the Union"; and he explained, "A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper." He went so far as to hint at the possibility that the South would some day be obliged to resort to separation and war in self-defense.

Jefferson was not alone in his apocalyptic vision. With a radically different end in view, Secretary of State and future President John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts confided to his diary that he believed it would be noble to die for the cause of the emancipation of the slaves. Weighing the cost of civil war and servile insurrection against the prospect of a nation free of slavery, he wrote, "So glorious would be its final issue, that, as God shall judge me, I dare not say that it is not to be desired."

During the three decades following the adoption of the Missouri Compromise, the North and the South drew ever farther apart. The South became the "Cotton Kingdom," producing most of the world's supply of the snowy fiber as well as a great variety of other crops and of animals. The bulk of the commercial crops was grown on plantations that were worked by some 3.2 million black slaves representing a capital investment of about $1.5 billion. The large planters were the economic, social, and political elite of the region. Southern cities, small by northern standards, were the home of a class of affluent, slave-owning merchants, bankers, and professionals who were allied socially and politically with the large planters. Also populating the cities were numerous shopkeepers, skilled craftsmen, and common laborers. But the overwhelming majority of the southern whites were independent farmers and herdsmen.

Although three-fourths of the southern white population owned no slaves, the whites generally supported slavery. This attitude sprang, in part, out of ambition to become planters and slave owners. But it grew mainly from a pervasive conviction of white racial superiority accompanied by the fear that emancipation would bring violence and social degradation. Jacksonian political democracy was as influential in most southern states as it was elsewhere in establishing universal white adult male suffrage. Recent scholarship strongly challenges the once-popular view that the masses of southern whites were controlled by the wealthy slave-owning planters. But all were agreed in their approval of black slavery and white domination. Ironically, most of the white population equated democracy for whites with slavery for blacks.

The North expanded as a versatile and dynamic community featuring manufacturing, commerce, banking, farming, free labor, and the rapid growth of cities. The dominant economic and social class comprised merchants, manufacturers, bankers, and professionals. Less than

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

half the population were farmers; the remainder were shopkeepers, tradesmen, mechanics, and factory laborers.

Slavery had been abolished in those northern states where it had once been practiced, and, for a variety of reasons, the northern population generally opposed the institution. First, the opposition came from a moral conviction that slavery was inherently wrong, a belief that stretched back to the very earliest colonial days, when it was especially firm among the Quaker community. By the mid-nineteenth century the conviction had spread to the great majority of the northern people. There was also a significant economic dimension in the northern antislavery sentiment, the fear of competition from slave labor and the awareness that work itself was degraded by slavery. Finally and paradoxically, a racial factor contributed to the northern attitude. Antipathy against slavery often went hand in hand with a racism that was similar in essence, if not in pervasiveness or intensity, to the southern racial feeling. Many northerners objected to the presence of slavery in their midst, in part, because they objected to the presence of blacks there.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s the North witnessed a ferment of social reform in its religious and intellectual life. This included movements devoted to temperance, feminism, and pacifism, to improvements in the treatment of insane asylum inmates, and to the general uplift of society through education and a religious emphasis on ameliorating the circumstances of the earthly life. But the most revolutionary of these movements was the crusade against slavery, with William Lloyd Garrison of Boston its most uncompromising spokesman. The crusade grew out of the moral and cultural sensibilities and the social and economic interests of the region.

The South rejected most of the reforms, stigmatizing them as isms, and turned increasingly conservative in its thinking. The region particularly repudiated the abolitionist movement and began to look upon slavery as a "positive good" instead of a "necessary evil." Orthodox religion, adhering to a biblical justification of slavery, became the "mighty fortress" of the southern culture. Ominously, the two largest American churches, the Baptist and Methodist, split into northern and southern branches; the Presbyterian church divided into two schools of sharply differing theological and social beliefs.

Slavery was the most emotional and visible issue in the church separations, but the split actually symbolized a widening breach in the entire mythology or outlook of the two regions. The Reverend James H. Thornwell, foremost theologian and intellectual of the Old South, contrasted the two sectional points of view in terms of a social, cultural, and spiritual Armageddon: "The parties in this conflict are not merely abolitionists and slaveholders. They are atheists, socialists, communists, red republican jacobins on the one side, and the friends of order

and regulated freedom on the other. In one word, the world is the battleground, Christianity and atheism the combatants; and the progress of humanity at stake."

In 1850, as Clay addressed the Senate, the spirit of sectional controversy was dangerously inflamed over the question of the spread of slavery into the Mexican cession, a vast, politically unorganized area recently acquired in the war with Mexico (1846–1848), and which ultimately would become all or parts of six states of the American Southwest. Members of the Senate were divided into four conflicting attitudes on the question. The extreme northern attitude was that expressed in the Wilmot Proviso, a measure proposed but defeated during the war that would have prohibited slavery anywhere in lands annexed as a result of the hostilities. Whig Senator William H. Seward of New York was the most prominent advocate of this school of thought. The extreme southern attitude insisted on the principle enunciated by Democratic Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, chief author of the doctrine of state rights, which demanded federal protection of slave owners and their property in all territories.

Two groups held the intervening ground in the controversy. The believers in what soon would be known as "popular sovereignty," led by Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, called for noninterference by Congress in order that the settlers in a territory might decide for themselves the legality of slavery locally. Finally, there were those who wished to extend the line of the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific Ocean. Democratic Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was the leading supporter of this proposition.

No American doubted the gravity of the moment. The previous year Calhoun had drafted a manifesto urging the slave states to unite politically in their opposition to the antislavery forces that were rising in the North. At his behest, a convention of delegates from the slave states was being formed to meet during the summer in Nashville. Without an acceptable compromise on the issue of slavery in the Mexican territory, there was the implied threat that the Nashville Convention would adopt the ultimate measure of state rights as expounded by Calhoun, that of secession.

In his proposals Clay offered something to all sides in the controversy. He called for the admission of California as a free state because the population there, swollen by the 1849 gold rush, was large enough for immediate statehood and had already approved a constitution excluding slavery; the organization of the remainder of the Mexican cession into the territories of Utah and New Mexico without "any restriction or condition on the subject of slavery" (in other words, according to the principle of popular sovereignty); the settlement of a Texas–New Mexico boundary dispute in favor of New Mexico, but with compensa-

tion to Texas by federal redemption of the bonds that constituted the state's public debt; the abolition of interstate slave trading, but not slavery itself, within the District of Columbia; and a strong fugitive slave law that would compel state and local authorities to assist federal marshals in the arrest and return of runaways anywhere in the nation.

Clay drew fully upon his great powers of persuasion in this historic valedictory. Near the end of his address he grasped a fragment said to be from the coffin of George Washington, and holding it aloft like a relic of the True Cross, he exhorted his colleagues to take the necessary measures for preserving the republic that Washington had done so much to create.

On February 5 and 6 Clay again occupied the Senate floor to deliver a prolonged emotional appeal in support of the proposals he had submitted earlier. He pleaded earnestly for a spirit of charity and compromise on all sides. He expressed the sentiments of many Americans in arguing that slavery could not thrive in the Southwest because the soil and climate there were not suited for plantation agriculture. He accurately predicted that any attempt at disunion would bring on a bloody civil war, and he closed with a ringing adjuration that the senators "solemnly pause...at the edge of the precipice, before the fearful and disastrous leap is taken into the yawning abyss below."

The most memorable political rhetoric and philosophy of the great debate were expressed by Clay and the two other elder statesmen of the American forum—Calhoun and Whig Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. Of these, the next to command the floor was Calhoun. An ardent nationalist in his early career, but now for more than two decades the foremost champion of southern sectionalism, he was a man of formidable intellect and an intractable sense of purpose. He had long sought to reconcile southern and national interests by blending the regional political, economic, and racial creeds into a class theory of society that protected the South and its institution of slavery, and established the region as a national stabilizing force between capital and labor. Because of his class theory of society, he has been called by the historian Richard Hofstadter "the Marx of the master class."

Ravaged by tuberculosis, too sick to deliver his own address, Calhoun sat swathed in flannels, his eyes sunken but luminous, while a colleague, Senator James M. Mason of Virginia, read his prepared speech. In it Calhoun reviewed the history of the sectional antagonism and attributed it to the growing imbalance of strength between the majority North and the minority South, an imbalance which he laid to the unfair actions of the federal government. Like Clay, he forecast disunion unless, he argued, proper measures were adopted to redress the balance.

What Calhoun had in mind but did not say explicitly was the establishment of a "concurrent majority," which in his writings he described

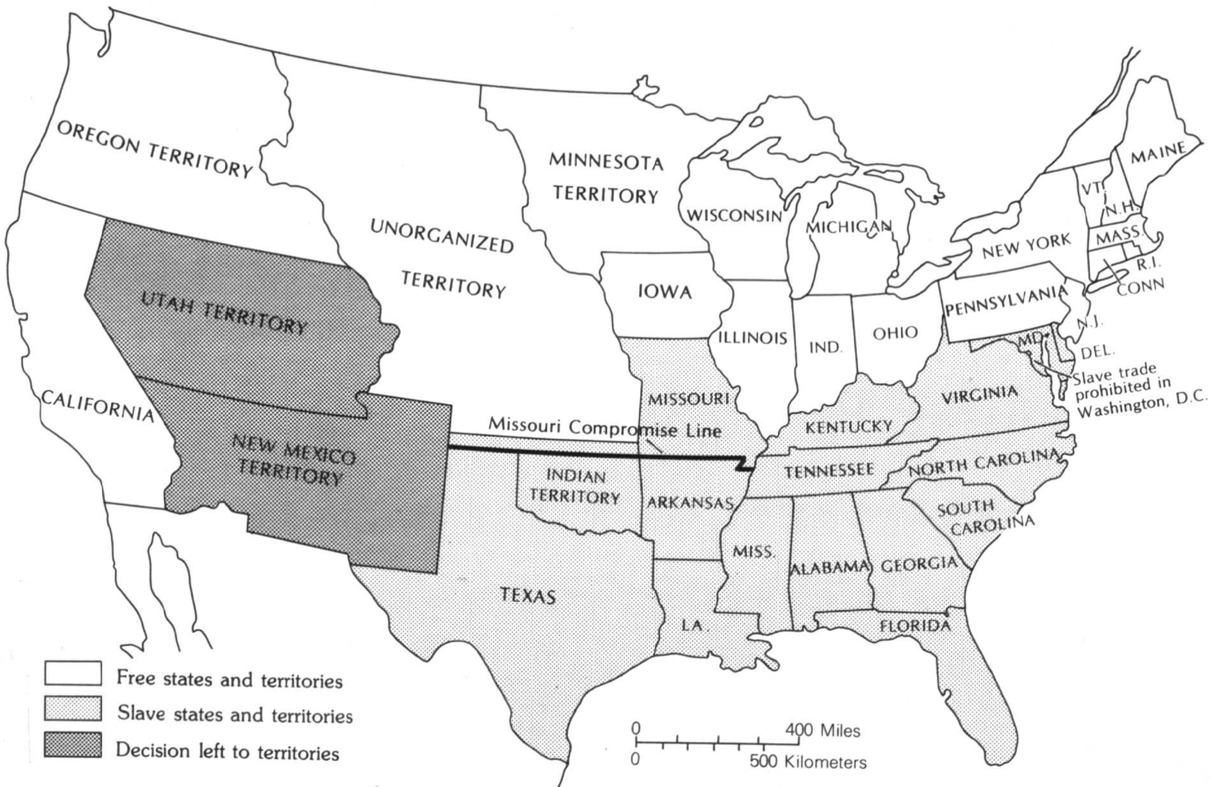
as a political device "to give the weaker section, in some form or another, a negative on the action of the government," specifically, he suggested, through the creation of a dual presidency, each executive to represent a section of the country and each to possess the veto power over acts of Congress. His address concluded that if the North was unwilling to cooperate in restoring the sectional equilibrium, "...let the States we both represent agree to separate and part in peace"; and, somberly, if the North was unwilling for the South to depart in peace, "...we shall know what to do, when you reduce the question to submission or resistance."

Three days later, on March 7, Webster took the floor. Like his peers in the historic congressional triumvirate, he too was almost at the end of his course, already showing signs of the illness that would soon take his life. Portly and dark of visage, powerful in phrase and magisterial in gesture, he was perhaps unmatched in America as an orator. Ironically, his career had crossed Calhoun's as Webster had moved from an early New England sectionalism into the position of supreme spokesman of federal authority over state rights. Just as Calhoun ultimately came to identify southern political, economic, and social well-being with sectionalism, Webster came to identify New England political, economic, and social well-being with nationalism.

Although Webster abominated slavery and had long opposed any expansion of it, he now adopted, out of fear for the Union, a remarkably conciliatory tone. Speaking, he said, "not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American," he asked his northern colleagues to forbear in their efforts to enact the Wilmot Proviso. He too believed slavery had reached its geographic limits and declared, "I would not take pains uselessly to re-enact the will of God." But he warned his southern colleagues that peaceable disunion would be impossible, and he urged the entire body to accept the compromise proposals. This address is remembered as Webster's greatest.

Congress enacted the proposals, but not immediately or directly as a result of the implorings of Clay and Webster. Ultimately, the following autumn, through the astute management of Senator Douglas, the Senate approved the measures, and, with the support of the Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives, Howell Cobb of Georgia, the lower chamber followed suit. In both instances the victory occurred through a coalition of congressmen from both Whig and Democratic parties and from both sections of the nation.

Nor were the legislators' motives entirely patriotic. There is reason to believe the congressional will was influenced by the holders of Texas bonds, which until redeemed by federal funds seemed worthless. Even the fates intervened in favor of the compromise. During the spring and summer two of its most powerful opponents died. One of these was President Zachary Taylor, a slave-owning but nationalistic southerner



SLAVE AND FREE TERRITORIES ACCORDING TO THE COMPROMISE OF 1850.

who believed the question of slavery in the Mexican cession was a false issue and looked upon the entire controversy as representing a political maneuver. The other person to die was Calhoun, whose death preceded Taylor's and whose last words were reported to have been a cry of despair: "The South, the poor South."

With the passage of the Compromise of 1850 the nation breathed a sigh of relief over what seemed at the moment to be the end of the slavery dispute. President Millard Fillmore, Taylor's successor and a supporter of the compromise, called it a "final and irrevocable settlement" of the issue. The Nashville Convention failed to ignite the secessionist movement that such southern "fire-eaters" as Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina hoped for. The southern states expressly approved the compromise in specially elected state conventions, but they warned grimly that a breakdown of the agreement would result in secession.

The presidential election of 1852 also seemed to put the nation's stamp of approval on the compromise. Although both major parties endorsed it, the Whigs with General Winfield Scott of Virginia as their candidate endorsed it only halfheartedly; their platform merely "acquiesced" to it. The Democrats firmly subscribed to the compromise, and by nominating Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, a so-called doughface candidate (a northern term of derision for a northern man with southern ties and sympathies), they gave their party a strong southern flavor. The third participant in the contest was the Free Soil party, a group dedicated to prohibiting the further spread of slavery. Their platform explicitly denounced the compromise and condemned any expansion of slavery as a "sin against God and a crime against man." With the estrangement of many Whigs from their party, the Democrats were victorious.

But an ominous undercurrent of dissent flowed beneath the acceptance of the compromise. The preeminent congressional spokesmen for this mood were Senators William H. Seward and Jefferson Davis. Seward denounced political compromise in any form as being "inherently vicious and wrong," and he specifically attacked the Compromise of 1850 as a violation of the spirit of the Constitution. Then he added a statement that would one day return to haunt him, saying that even if the Constitution could be so construed as to sanction slavery, there was a "higher law" through which the practice must be banned from the western territories. Davis, in urging the extension of the Missouri Compromise line, argued that slavery could indeed flourish in the Mexican cession, and he condemned the Compromise of 1850 as representing a victory of a northern "aggressive majority" over the minority South. The North, he said, was following the path to division and war.

Countless northerners, particularly the New Englanders, never accepted the compromise in their hearts. The abolitionists condemned it openly. Webster chided the intransigence of his own people, saying,

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com