increased in the decades before 1860. Few defenders, much less advocates, appeared. The public stigma and the hostility of the law made it clear why: those who practiced it did not preach it.

New Orleans, with its large population of free and enslaved blacks, had the most famous demi-world in Dixie. The celebrated masked balls and the casual acceptance of colored mistresses seemed to reflect its Spanish and French roots. Yet that explanation is too facile. The rural areas of Louisiana, some of which reflected similar origins, did not develop the same mores; and, more persuasively, other cities with quite different beginnings did. Actually what visitors noticed about New Orleans was true of urban life throughout the South.

VII

Northern cities, too, had their disorganized elements who left a trail across police blotters, court records, and poorhouse lists. There, too, community leaders, somewhat bewildered by the spread of undisciplined low life, sought some way to introduce system and stability. But, important as this was to civic leaders elsewhere, in the South the problem was greatly complicated by the existence of slavery. On the one hand, the institution required a high degree of order, the careful regulation of Negro affairs, and a fixed status for bondsmen. On the other hand, the city demanded fluidity, a constant re-allocation of human resources, and a large measure of social mobility. Initially, it appeared as though slavery could provide the discipline town life seemed to need. In the long run, however, the force of urbanization loosened the restraints of bondage, smudged the distinctions of status among Negroes, and at points pierced the racial walls of Dixie's cities.

This antithesis was early felt by some municipal leaders.

Since slavery was presumed to be an established part of Southern town life for any foreseeable future, none talked about incompatibility. Instead, the dominant race sought to solve it with ordinances, the orderly development of a legal hiring-out system, and a plentiful police force in case of trouble. Yet the acids of urbanization continually eroded the discipline on which bondage rested. Though the disintegration was often hard to gauge, those close to the problem knew it was happening.

To arrest the attrition and handle its consequences, Southern cities moved along three lines. One involved the sale of young male blacks into the countryside. This removed one of the most disturbing elements from the urban scene while meeting a constant demand for field hands in the cotton and cane regions. A second was the tightening of emancipation procedures to stop the accumulation of free Negroes in towns. A third was to develop racial arrangements which took into account the new situation and which embodied most of the features later identified as segregation.

The sale of the men into the cotton and cane country was never an official policy. After the Vesey affair a Charleston spokesman recommended the thinning of the Negro population as a deliberate program, and the *Richmond Enquirer* advocated "reducing surely but quietly, the number of our slaves" following Turner's uprising.[58] But to force owners to this course never seemed feasible. Likewise, the widespread interest in attracting white immigrants to Southern cities to replace black labor, even as domestic servants, was not easy to implement. And the high demand for field hands in the new areas furnished a convenient rationale for action that was only partially economic in motivation.

Despite these difficulties the tendency to sell men into the country was pronounced. It was, in fact, the theme of John S. C. Abbott's diary of his Southern trip in 1859. "The slaves

in the cities, working in the midst of the conversation of white men, listen eagerly, and gain some information," he noted. "This has alarmed their masters, and they are sending them off, as fast as possible, to the plantations where, as in a tomb, no sight or sound of knowledge can reach them." [59] An examination of real estate conveyances in New Orleans, which list the names and residences of both buyer and seller, confirms the observation. The persistent imbalance between the sexes characteristic of urban Negro populations reveals the same tendency. Perhaps, however, the wry observation of the *Daily Crescent* in 1853 describes best the situation: "The whole number of slaves in New Orleans does not exceed 16,-000, of which the greater portion are women and children." [60]

While Dixie's towns sloughed off their male bondsmen, they also moved to reduce the number of free Negroes in their midst. This policy involved a change in strategy, for initially emancipation was used as part of a sophisticated control system. "The object of design of such permission," wrote the mayor of New Orleans' Third Municipality, "is to offer a reward to such slaves as would demean themselves correctly, be respectful to the white population or render important services to the state or to their masters." Another object was "to encourage the slave population in imitating the good example and following in the footsteps of those who by an honest, active, and useful conduct have succeeded in obtaining their freedom." [61] But everywhere the fear of increasing the number of liberated blacks, no matter how well-behaved, overcame the advantages of the selected manumission program. A chorus rose which demanded not only restriction but absolute prohibition.

The case of New Orleans was illustrative, because its policy encompassed both the widest leniency for most of the antebellum years and an absolute ban on the eve of war. Through most of the period, under Louisiana law, city councils could

grant freedom on petition, and they did so on a substantial scale. In the four years between 1846 and 1850 the First Municipality alone emancipated 321 blacks, while the Second Municipality manumitted at a rate of about 75 annually. The grounds were usually "long important and faithful services" and most carried the notation, "without being compelled to leave the state." [62] Masters wishing to let their slaves go generally got a sympathetic hearing from officials. But not all requests were granted. When, for example, Sara Connor's petition came up for action, a police report disclosed that a few months earlier she had been picked up "in a house on St. John street, dancing, in company with sixteen colored girls, mostly slaves, and about ten or twelve white men." The committee decided that Sara was liberated enough already. [63]

New Orleans' liberal practice obscured somewhat the increasing hostility to emancipation of any kind in Louisiana. The 1830 law required the newly freed Negro to leave the state within thirty days; in 1852 the right to manumit was taken from city officials and given to the legislature. Flooded with petitions, worried about the influence of the unbonded on the slaves, and concerned about rumored insurrections, the state government in 1857 forbade manumission under any conditions. Two years before, a legislator had expressed the tighter attitude: "if slavery is not an evil . . . why should we emancipate under any circumstances in the State of Louisiana?" [64] In 1859 provisions were made for free blacks to choose a master and return to bondage.

Other cities exercised less control over emancipation than New Orleans, but the tendency everywhere was the same. When an owner manumitted, his slave was to be removed quickly from the state. Free colored people from the outside could not become residents, and even Negro sailors arriving in port temporarily on business were kept onboard ships or confined in jail. Though petitions to state legislatures often

brought relief, the possibility became more remote with each passing decade. By 1860 the percentage of free Negroes among the South's urban population had dropped considerably.

VIII

While Southern cities increasingly moved to reduce their colored population, both slave and free, they also developed a new system of racial deference more appropriate to urban life than slavery in its traditional form. As the institution of slavery encountered mounting difficulties and, as its control over the blacks weakened, another arrangement was devised which maintained great social distance within the physical proximity of town life. Increasingly public policy tried to separate the races whenever the surveillance of the master was likely to be missing. To do this, the distinction between slave and free Negro was erased; race became more important than legal status; and a pattern of segregation emerged inside the broader framework of the "peculiar institution."

In a sense this tendency was always present, though the reliance on traditional controls obscured its importance. The heart of the established system was, of course, the subordination of the slave to his owner. The wide discretion vested in the master made day-to-day discipline almost a private matter. But in the cities a public etiquette was needed to govern the relations of races when the blacks were beyond the supervision of their owners. Increasingly that etiquette required the separation of black and white without regard to legal status. Beginning in only a few areas, the arrangement spread to include the most important public aspects of life.

Taverns, restaurants, and hotels were always off-limits to the Negroes. The laws against trading with slaves, of course, covered all these areas, and their location in the business part of town prevented much laxity. Free blacks fell under the

same ban, though by custom rather than by law. In public conveyances this discrimination appeared again. Richmond's ordinances, to cite but one case, prohibited Negroes from "driving, using or riding in any Hackney coach or other carriage for hire unless in the capacity of a servant." [65] In New Orleans the street railway kept separate cars for blacks. And encroachments on this arrangement met with physical exclusion. In 1833, for instance, when "certain colored persons wishing to go to the lake, took possession of the cars appropriated to white people," the conductor evicted them. [66]

Public grounds, however, presented an even clearer case. Savannah's 1827 ordinances, for example, excluded "negroes, mullattoes, or other colored persons" from "the public promenade in South Broad street, or on that leading from thence to the Hospital." And the preamble said why: "for the purpose of protecting the Citizens while engaged in recreation upon the Public Walks, from molestation or intrusion of improper persons." [67] A section of Richmond's Negro code was entitled "What place slaves not to Walk or be in." The segregated areas included "the grounds adjacent to the City Spring, City Hall, or Athenaeum," as well as "any of the places known as city grounds" and "any public burying ground for white persons." The law relented if the slave accompanied his owner as employer, but the prohibition of free blacks was absolute. [68]

Charleston's regulations kept colored people off the "enclosure of the Garden at White Point" and forbade them "to walk on the East or South Batteries." [69] If attending white children, and if they had a ticket, slaves could enter. Even this variation, however, brought criticism. "It now takes from four to two wenches, *with their attendents,* to take one baby in the air," one white wrote indignantly, while taxpayers are "jostled by a succession of darkies" each of whom has "a detachment of 'little niggers' at her heels." [70]

These measures simply excluded the blacks without provid-