

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XII.—No. III.

OCTOBER, MDCCCLIX.

ARTICLE I.

REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

The Revised Book of Discipline, by having been reported to the last General Assembly, has become, in some sort, the property of the Church; and as its fate will, in all likelihood, be settled by the next Assembly, it is a matter of grave importance that the principles it embodies should be rightly understood, and the grounds and tendencies of the changes introduced in it set in their true light. It has already been subjected to a severe criticism—a criticism extremely kind in its spirit and temper to the authors of the book, but without the slightest mercy or favor to the peculiarities of the book itself. The contrast between the courtesy with which the members of the Committee, personally considered, have been treated, and the freedom with which their production has been handled, may be taken as an apt illustration of the genius of Presbyterianism, which teaches charity to the man without concessions to his errors, and which, while it repudiates all human authority, endeavors to observe the maxim: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. We thank our brethren for the good opinion they have expressed of us. Indeed our modesty might have been shocked at the laudatory terms which they have

ARTICLE VI.

THE FOREIGN SLAVE TRADE.—CAN IT BE REVIVED WITHOUT VIOLATING THE MOST SACRED PRINCIPLES OF HONOR, HUMANITY AND RELIGION?

This question indicates at once the character and design of the following article. There has been no little discussion in the South, for some time past, about re-opening the African slave trade, and if we may judge from the earnestness and vehemence with which it is pressed upon public attention by its advocates, we may expect a still more serious agitation of the subject. There is every reason to believe that the great majority of the more intelligent classes are very decidedly opposed to it, and no doubt this will continue to be the case. Still there are good and patriotic men who, through ignorance or forgetfulness of the actual character of this traffic, or from a perverted view of some of its moral bearings, are liable to be drawn over to the other side of the question, and it is to this class of persons mainly, that our arguments are addressed. As a native of the South, tenderly alive to whatever concerns her honor and welfare, and, at the same time, having had special opportunities, by a prolonged residence in Africa, of knowing something of the true character of this traffic, especially in its baleful and desolating influence upon that country, we hesitate not to raise our solemn protest against its renewal, and we hope for at least a candid and impartial hearing on the part of those to whom our facts and arguments are addressed.

It is not difficult to see what has raised up advocates for a cause that has lain so long under the ban of almost universal condemnation. The rampant abolitionism of the North, the reluctant and hesitating manner in which the fugitive slave law is enforced in most of the free States, the participation of the French Government in the traffic under the specious name

of the apprentice system, the felt want of more laborers in the sugar and cotton growing country, and other considerations of a political character, are, no doubt, among the chief causes which have led to the present excited and open advocacy of this traffic. Every impartial mind must see, nevertheless, that this is after all but a superficial and one-sided view of the matter. It brings to view the wrong-doing of unreasonable men; holds up certain advantages that might possibly accrue to the Southern country from the revival of the traffic; but leaves entirely out of the account the cruel and unjustifiable measures by which alone the object can be attained. We have too high an estimate of the good sense, the Christian moderation and the honorable bearing of the Southern people, to believe that they ever will, either from motives of retaliation, or the hope of gain, lend their countenance knowingly to the revival of a traffic which, in its progress, must necessarily trample in the dust every sentiment of honor, humanity and religion. We believe it is only necessary to bring before their minds a distinct and truthful picture of the real character of this trade—what it always has been, and necessarily must be—to call forth their unqualified denunciation of it, and to impart this information is the main design of the following pages.

The existing institution of domestic slavery rests upon an entirely different basis. It was brought about, whether through lawful or unlawful measures, by a generation of men who have passed away. At the present time it is purely a question of Providence, with the origin of which the present generation have little or no responsibility. If there are wrongs connected with the system as it now exists, (and what human relation does not give rise to them,) they ought, as far as possible, to be corrected. But, whatever wrong-doing there may have been in connection with the original establishment of the institution, and whatever incidental abuses may now be connected with it, every right minded and honest man must see that it has been overruled by a kind and merciful Providence for the good of those of the African race who were brought to this country. They are happier, better and more useful men and women, than they would have been if born and

brought up in the wilds of Africa, or than they would have been if their forefathers, upon their arrival here, had been turned loose to roam the swamps and woods of America, instead of being subjected to the restraints of servitude. Nor is there anything to prevent their making still greater progress in moral and social improvement, without any material change in their present relations. This fact, however, while it ought to qualify and moderate the overheated zeal of those who can see nothing but evil in slavery, affords no countenance whatever to those who will use it as an argument for the revival of the slave trade. This, as we propose to show, is evil, and evil only, and can be justified by no indirect or ulterior good whatever. To seize men on the coast of Africa by fraud, by violence, or a resort to bloodshed—and these are the only means, as we shall presently show, by which they can be obtained—and bring them to this country for the avowed and ostensible purpose of ameliorating their condition, is not only to practice a deception upon ourselves, but is virtually doing evil that good may come, and sanctioning the odious Jesuitical dogma, that the end justifies the means. Incalculable blessings have flowed to the world from the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, but does this justify those who, with cruel hands, put him to death? The money of the miser might relieve the wants of the poor, or promote the cause of morality and benevolence, but will this justify the application of the assassin's knife to his throat? What becomes of society where such principles are sanctioned?

It does not come within the prescribed range of this article to discuss the question whether fresh importations of Africans to this country would prove a blessing or a curse. Southern men, of wiser heads and abler pens, have already discussed this branch of the subject, and have demonstrated, as we conceive, the extreme folly and danger of the measure. Our object will be to show that the South cannot countenance the revival of this traffic without dishonoring herself, and inflicting renewed and incalculable misery and wretchedness upon the inhabitants of Africa, and this we propose to do by showing that the trade never has been, and cannot be, carried on to any

considerable extent, except by fraud, by violence, and by perpetual warfare and bloodshed.

The slave trade, in its most vigorous days, was carried on in Western Africa over a sea-coast line of more than 4,000 miles, and in Eastern Africa along a line of nearly half that distance, whilst a vigorous traffic also found its way across the Great Desert, and through Egypt to Western Asia. The markets of North and South America, including the West Indies, have been supplied with slaves almost entirely from Western Africa, and it is to this part of the Continent that our statements will mainly apply. There are three types or conditions of society here that should be mentioned, as indicating the different modes by which slaves are procured for exportation.

1st. We have the Mohammedan negroes, particularly the Fulahs, the Jalofs and the Mandingos, occupying Senegambia, the great country lying between the Senegal and Gambia rivers. These people, being restrained by the principles of their religion, have never waged war with each other, or with any other portion of the Mohammedan family, for the express purpose of obtaining slaves, but they have laid hands unscrupulously upon all the Pagan tribes along their borders, and have, at the same time, been very actively engaged in transporting slaves through their country to the sea coast from the great kingdoms of Soudan.

2d. Our second division includes the great Pagan despotisms of Ashanti, Dahomy, Yoruba, Benin and Congo, in Northern and Southern Guinea. Among these, standing armies have always been maintained, for the avowed purpose of capturing slaves by the wholesale, or for defending themselves against the retaliation which their own lawlessness is constantly provoking. These communities, unlike the preceding, are under no religious restraints to influence them in this matter, and they consequently wage war not only upon each other, and the weaker tribes around them, but when these sources are dried up, they prey upon themselves. This process of demoralization and self immolation has been carried on until three of the five above mentioned kingdoms have lost all just claim to a distinct nationality.

3d. The third class embraces the great mass of the Pagan population of Northern and Southern Guinea, not included in the above mentioned kingdoms. These live in small independent communities, varying in population from one or two to forty or fifty thousand, but having no special political relationships, except such as necessarily grow out of their proximity to each other. These smaller communities taken together, form the great mass of the population of Western Africa. Wars are seldom waged among them for the express purpose of obtaining slaves. The traffic here assumes the outward appearances of a peaceful commerce, but, in fact, as will be shown presently, has been no less destructive of the peace and welfare of the country.

In relation to the mode in which the slave trade has been carried on, in the two first mentioned divisions, the writer has but limited personal knowledge, and he must rely therefore upon the testimony of others to show what it has been in these regions. He will quote, however, only from such travellers as are well-known, and whose testimony on all other subjects would be received with implicit confidence. Our object will be to show from the undoubted and concurrent testimony of these authors, that the slave trade has always been attended with scenes of the greatest cruelty, and that almost all the anarchy, misery, bloodshed and warfare, that have reigned in that country for two centuries past, are to be traced to this source.

We begin our quotations from Bruce, the well-known traveller in Abyssinia and Eastern Africa. In speaking of the slave hunts in those regions, he says:

“The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated, parts of their bodies being always carried away as trophies; several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph.”

Major Denham, who travelled through the greater part of Soudan in 1823, gives the following account of the miseries entailed upon that part of the country by the prosecution of

this traffic. Speaking of the slave hunts, several of which he witnessed with his own eyes, he writes:

“On attacking a place, it is the custom of the country instantly to fire it; and, as they (the villages) are all composed of straw huts only, the whole is shortly devoured by the flames. The unfortunate inhabitants fly quickly from the devouring element, and fall immediately into the hands of their no less merciless enemies, who surround the place; the men are quickly massacred, and the women and children lashed together and made slaves.”

He adds, in the same connection, that the Begharmi nation had been defeated by the Sheik of Bornou in five successive expeditions, in which not less than 20,000 men were slaughtered, and not less than 15,000 more were reduced to slavery. He gives the following account of a treaty of alliance between the Sheik of Bornou and the Sultan of Mandara:

“This treaty of alliance was confirmed by the Sheik’s receiving in marriage the daughter of the Sultan, and the marriage portion was to be the produce of an immediate expedition into the Kerdy country, by the united forces of these allies. The results were as favorable as the most savage confederacy could have anticipated. Three thousand unfortunate wretches were dragged from their native wilds, and sold to perpetual slavery, while probably *double that number were sacrificed to obtain them.*”

He mentions the following fact as having occurred under his own eyes. “Darkala was quickly burnt, and another smaller town near to it, and the few inhabitants found in them, chiefly infants and aged persons, were put to death without mercy, and thrown into the flames.”

Ashmun, the well-known philanthropist, and formerly Governor of Liberia, communicated the following statement to the Colonization Society in 1823:

“The following incident I relate, not for its singularity, for similar events take place, perhaps, every month in the year, but it has fallen under my own observation, and I can vouch for its authenticity: King Boatswain, our most powerful supporter, and steady friend among the natives (so he has uniformly shown himself), received a quantity of goods on trust from a French slaver, for which he stipulated to pay young slaves—he makes it a point of honor to be punctual to his engagements. The time was at hand when he expected the return of the slaver, and he had not the slaves. Looking around on the peace-

able tribes about him for his victims, he singled out the Queaks, a small agricultural and trading people of most inoffensive character. His warriors were skilfully distributed to the different hamlets, and making a simultaneous assault on the sleeping occupants in the dead of the night, accomplished, without difficulty or resistance, in one hour, the annihilation of the whole tribe—every adult, man and woman, was murdered—every hut fired! Very young children, generally, shared the fate of their parents; the boys and girls alone were reserved to pay the Frenchman.”

The following statement is contained in an official report made by the Mixed Commission Court at Sierra Leone to the British Government in 1825 :

“The Cassoos are represented as having carried fire, rapine and murder, throughout the different villages through which they passed, most of the women and children of which, together with the prisoners, were immediately sold to the slave factors, who were at hand to receive them.”

Lander, with whose travels, adventures and discoveries, almost every school boy is familiar, makes the following statements about this traffic :

“It has produced the most baleful effects, causing anarchy, injustice and oppression, to reign in Africa, and exciting nation to rise up against nation, and man against man; it has covered the face of the country with desolation. All these evils, and many others, has slavery accomplished; in return for which the Europeans, for whose benefit, and by whose connivance and encouragement it has flourished so extensively, have given to the heartless natives ardent spirits, tawdry silk dresses, and paltry necklaces of beads.”

McGregor Laird, Esq., a gentleman well-known in Liverpool at the present day, and the chief contractor of the steam mail line between England and the West coast of Africa, ascended the Niger in 1832 to the confluence, and gives the following account of the proceedings of the Felatahs, a well-known Mohammedan tribe, who are constantly engaged in capturing slaves to be transported to the sea coast. He writes :

“Scarcely a night passed but we heard the screams of some unfortunate beings that were carried off into slavery by these villainous depredators. The inhabitants of the towns in the route of the Felatahs fled across the river on the approach of the enemy.” “A few days after the arrival of the fugitives, a column of smoke rising in the

air, about five miles above the confluence, marked the advance of the Felatahs; and in two days afterwards the whole of the towns, including Addah, Cuddah, and five or six others, were in a blaze. The shrieks of the unfortunate wretches that had not escaped, answered by the loud wailings and lamentations of their friends and relations (encamped on the opposite bank of the river), at seeing them carried off into slavery, and their habitations destroyed, produced a scene, which, though *common enough in the country*, had seldom, if ever before, been witnessed by European eyes, and showed to me, in a more striking light than I had hitherto beheld it, the horrors attendant upon this traffic."

Col. Nichols, formerly Governor of Fernando Po, states, in a letter to Mr. Buxton, in relation to a visit which he made to Old Calabar in 1834, that "he found the natives boasting of a predatory excursion in which they had recently been engaged, in which they had surprised a village, killed those who had resisted, and carried off the remainder as slaves. I heard an African boy, who formed one of the party, declare that he had killed three himself."

Rev. Mr. Fox, a well known Wesleyan missionary at the Gambia, and the author of a most excellent volume on that part of the country, makes the following statement in a communication to the Board of Missions in 1837:

"The neighborhood of M'Carthy's Island is again in a very disturbed state. Scarcely are the rains over, and the produce of a plentiful harvest gathered in, ere the noise of battle and the din of warfare is heard at a distance, with all its attendant horrors; mothers, snatching up their children with a few necessary articles, flee for their lives; towns, after being pillaged of as much cattle, &c., as the banditti require, are immediately set on fire; columns of smoke ascend the heavens; the cries of those who are being butchered may be more easily conceived than expressed; and those who escape destruction are carried into the miseries of hopeless slavery. A number of Bambarras are again on the North bank of the river, not far from this place, and the poor Foulahs at Jamalli have consequently fled to this island for protection, bringing with them as many of their cattle, and other things, as they could."

Rev. Mr. McBrair, another missionary of the same place and connection, and the author of several valuable volumes on African languages, in a letter to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Society of about the same date, states:

"On other occasions a party of men hunters associate together, and,

falling suddenly upon a small town or village during the night, they massacre all the men that offer any resistance, and carry away the rest of the inhabitants as the best parts of their spoil. Or, when a chief-tain thinks himself sufficiently powerful, he makes the most frivolous excuses for waging war upon his neighbors, so that he may spoil his country of its inhabitants." He learned further: "that the wholesale method of seizure is by far the most frequent, and that without this plan, a sufficient number of victims could not be obtained for the market, so that it may be called the prevailing way of obtaining slaves."

Mr. Morgan, another missionary of the highest respectability in the same region of country, writes:

"I feel confident that the slave trade has established feuds among the African tribes about the Gambia, by which they will be embroiled in war for generations to come, unless the disposition be destroyed by Christianity, or their circumstances be changed by civilization."

John Duncan, Esq., under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, penetrated to the Kong Mountains in 1847, by passing through the country of Dahomy, one of the chief seats of the foreign slave trade even down to the present day, and makes the following remarks about the terrible desolations caused in that region of country by the slave hunts. He writes:

"But the horrors of the slave trade commence when the king of any country is in want of slaves. Some pretence is got up for making war, although it is nothing more than a slave hunt. This is conducted in the following manner: The point of attack is probably reconnoitered by one individual during the day, who then retires, most likely unsuspected of any evil design. The attacking party is afterwards marched close to town, and about two hours before day-break, an impetuous rush is made upon the place, which (in the interior) is generally surrounded by a broad, close-growing fence of dangerously prickly bushes, about 15 feet high. Such, however, is the practice and the dexterity of the King of Dahomy's female soldiers, that this terrible fence is scarcely deemed an obstacle. Then commences the dreadful capture and slaughter. The people, in general, are asleep when the attack is begun, and when roused so suddenly, and perhaps their house already on fire, make some resistance, whereupon they are instantly put to death. The others are tied around the neck with a piece of small grass rope, each soldier having that article, as well as a piece of chalk. Each soldier uses his own private mark on the back of as many slaves as he may capture, and also secures the scalps of as many as he may kill in the attack. After all is over, these slaves and scalps are presented to the chief, who gives each soldier an amount of cowries proportioned to the

number of captives he has taken, and also allows him to attach an additional cowry to the stock of his gun, which is accounted a mark of honorable distinction."

Rev. T. J. Bowen, a native of Georgia, and a missionary of the Southern Baptist Board, in Western Africa, in a volume of travels recently published, and with which many of the readers of this article are undoubtedly already familiar, makes the following statements about the effects of the slave trade upon Yoruba, the scene of his own missionary labors: "I have counted the sites of eighteen desolated towns within a distance of sixty miles between Badagry and Abeokuta, the legitimate result of the slave trade. The whole of Yoruba is full of depopulated towns, some of which were even larger than Abeokuta at the present time. And yet Abeokuta is supposed to contain, at the present time, more than 100,000 inhabitants. Of all the places visited by the Landers, only Ishaki, Igboho, Ikishi, and a few other villages, remain. Ijenna was destroyed a few weeks after my arrival in the country. Other and still larger towns in the same region have recently fallen. At one called Oke-Oddan, the Dahomy army captured and killed about 20,000, on which occasion the king presented Domingo, the Brazilian slaver, with 600 slaves. The whole number of people destroyed in this section of country within the last fifty years, cannot be less than 500,000!!!" Mr. Bowen may well say, as he does in the same connection: "Well meaning people, who advocate the restoration of the slave trade, have considered but one side of the question."

The last authority I would quote is that of the celebrated German traveller, Dr. Barth, who, it is well known, has just returned from one of the most thorough and extensive explorations ever made in Central Africa, and whose statements will be received with entire confidence in all parts of the civilized world. He represents those interior regions as in the same disturbed and unhappy condition that they were in the days of Clapperton and Denham; and assigns the same cause for their unhappiness and distraction. He accompanied the Sheik of Bornou on one of his slave hunts, as Major Denham had done more than thirty years ago. Some of the scenes wit-

nessed on this excursion were truly heart-sickening. He says:

“The village we had just reached was Kahala, and is one of the most considerable places in the Musga country. A large number of slaves had been caught this day; and in the course of the evening, after some skirmishing, in which three Bornou horsemen were killed, a great many more were killed; altogether there were said to be a thousand, and there were certainly not less than five hundred. To our utmost horror, not less than one hundred and seventy full grown men were mercilessly slaughtered in cold blood, the greater part of them being allowed to bleed to death, a leg having been severed from the body.”

On another occasion, he says:

“The whole village, which only a few moments before had been the abode of comfort and happiness, was destroyed by fire and made desolate. Slaughtered men, with their limbs severed from their bodies, were lying about in all directions, and made the passer-by shudder with horror.”

Any amount of similar testimony might be brought together if it were necessary. It is not in the capture of slaves alone, however, that these cruelties are practiced. Equally as great harshness is inflicted on their journey to the sea coast, during their detention there, and on what is called the middle passage, which in fact is but another term for the grossest cruelties ever practised upon any portion of the human race. We might speak of the principal highways to the sea coast as strewed with human bones, of human limbs worn to the bone with iron fetters, of hundreds of these human beings starved to death in the barracoons, because no vessel came to take them away at the appointed time; or, of whole cargoes suffocated to death in the hold of the ship by the attempt to avoid detection: but we refrain from these painful details. After a most careful examination of this whole subject, extending our inquiries over a period of more than a hundred years, and carefully weighing the statements of more than fifty different authors, we have come to the deliberate conclusion, that in the seizure of slaves, in the march to the sea coast, during their detention there and on the middle passage, the destruction of life must be more than one hundred and fifty per

cent. upon those safely landed in America. So, that to get one hundred slaves for practical purposes, at least one hundred and fifty lives must be sacrificed! Let us dwell upon this startling fact. In order to procure 100,000 laborers for the cotton and sugar fields of the South, we must go into the business with the full understanding, that it cannot be done except by sacrificing the lives of at least 150,000 immortal beings, to say nothing of the wide spread desolation which it must occasion in other respects in Africa. Is the South prepared for this? Will she forego her honor, her sense of justice, and her religion, so far as to associate herself with the vilest men that have ever disgraced the annals of humanity, and once more apply the torch of discord and war for the purpose of obtaining slaves? Can American civilization be promoted in no other way than by trampling out the last spark of life from the continent of Africa? Had the Creator no other object in forming this great continent, and filling it with inhabitants, than that it should become the theatre for the display of the worst passions of the rest of the world?

If any one would have a true picture of the cruel and desolating results that follow in the train of the slave trade, especially in those portions of the country we have under more special review at the present moment, let him peruse the pages of Barth with care and patience; note down the almost innumerable sites of desolated towns and cities through which he passed; the diminished population of the country compared with what it was thirty years ago when visited by Denham, and let him observe, above all, the perpetual strifes and exterminating wars going on in what would otherwise be one of the most peaceful and prosperous portions of that whole continent. Nor has this traffic been less disastrous to the great Pagan kingdoms nearer the sea coast. Benin and Congo have become completely disorganized, and neither, at the present day, can put up a plausible claim to a distinctive nationality. They retain now nothing but the name of their former greatness. Yoruba would have reached the same condition, if it had not been for the timely change in the tide of affairs, consequent upon the return of so many of her children from Sierra Leone

with the blessings of civilization and Christianity in their hands. Dahomy was once proud of her military prowess, and could count her population by hundreds of thousands, but is now rapidly sinking to the condition of mere lawless banditti. Ashanti, with her 2,000,000 of inhabitants would, long ere this, have reached the same condition of anarchy and depopulation, if her slave trade had not been arrested by the operations of the British forts along the Gold coast.

We do not ascribe all this disorder and deterioration to the exclusive influence of the slave trade. Africa is essentially a heathen country, and heathenism everywhere combines in itself almost every element of moral and social evil. But the slave trade has quickened and given intensity to all these elements of discord, and has thus made the African race one of the most unhappy and miserable people on the face of the earth.

Thus far our remarks have been restricted to the influence of the slave trade upon those portions of the country where it has been carried on by open warfare, and upon what may be denominated the wholesale operation. We proceed now to speak of its influence upon other parts of the country where it has assumed the outward form of a peaceful commerce; and we shall endeavor to show that, notwithstanding this more favorable exterior, it has not been less destructive of the peace and welfare of the country than the other system. On the previous part of our subject we have been compelled to rely, in a great measure, upon the testimony of others. In what is to follow we shall speak only of what we know, and testify only to what we have seen.

That portion of the population of Western Africa of which we are now to speak, though comprising only the smaller tribes or communities, forms, nevertheless, the great mass of the population of the country; and it is from this class that the great body of the slaves have heretofore been obtained. The principal points along the sea coast where this traffic was formerly concentrated, were at or near the mouths of the rivers Pongas, Gallinas, Sestos, Asaimi, Poppi, Lagos, Benin and Bonny, in Upper Guinea; and at Old Calabar, Cameroons,

Gaboon, Cape Lopez, Mayumba, Loango, Congo, Loando and Benguela, in Lower Guinea. So long as there was no prohibition of the traffic, vessels were in the habit of collecting their cargoes by touching at all or most of these points, and purchasing such slaves as might happen to be on hand. Sometimes a cargo was obtained by robbing some other vessel that had collected one, but which happened to be without the means of defence. The trade has always been characterized by piratical proceedings, and would, no doubt, be so in all future times, even if it were legalized. The mode of obtaining slaves had to be changed, however, after the British squadron was stationed on the coast for the purpose of suppressing the traffic. Vessels could no longer proceed leisurely along the coast, touching at these well known points, without multiplying the chances of seizure and confiscation. This led to the establishment of factories or barracoons, as they are called, at one or more of these points, where slaves could be gradually collected, and could be taken away without detaining the vessel in which they were shipped more than a few hours at any one place. It has usually required six months or a year to collect a full cargo at any one of the above mentioned points; and a much longer period, if there happened to be rival factories at the same place. A double pallisaded enclosure is always constructed for the confinement of the slaves as they are brought together, one portion of which is covered with thatch to defend the inmates from the sun and rain, but in other respects it is perfectly open, and when filled with wild savages reminds one of a great menagerie. No person of humane feelings would wish to visit one of these establishments a second time. The slaves are not only locked up in these enclosures, but they are further secured by being chained together in pairs, or in bands of five or six. They are brought to the factory from day to day, and are bartered for just as any article of native produce would be. The buyer asks no questions about how they have been obtained, and the seller volunteers no information on the subject. It is enough for the former to know that they are of suitable age, have sound and healthy constitutions, and will command a fair price in

the market for which they are destined. Tobacco, rum, guns, powder, cutlasses and cotton cloths, are the articles usually demanded and given in exchange, the value of which varies from fifteen or twenty to thirty or forty dollars.

But the question which mainly concerns our argument is, how are these slaves obtained for the market? This is a vital, all-important point, and no honest man will wish to evade it. Here we speak from personal knowledge, and it is on this point mainly that we feel constrained to testify.

We reply, in the first place that, with a few exceptions, they are not persons who were born in a state of servitude. I know that this is the prevailing opinion, but so far as my knowledge and observation go, it is a mistake. This class of persons, home-born slaves, are of all others the least liable to be sold into foreign servitude. From what this exemption proceeds, whether it is the kindlier feelings of the people, their superstitious fears, or the dread of some apprehended retribution, we were never able fully to ascertain. But of the fact itself, especially in Southern Guinea, we have no doubt. We know that an African slave dealer would almost as soon sell his own son as a bond slave born in his own house. Indeed, they are regarded more in the light of children than slaves. If only slaves, those previously reduced to this condition were transported across the ocean, then we would admit the force of the argument, that there is no essential difference between the African and the domestic, or inter-State trade. But when it is remembered that, in the former case, men must be reduced to the condition of servitude for the first time, and through fraud, violence or bloodshed, whilst in the latter case, it is a mere transfer of ownership from one individual to another, or from one section of the country to another, without any material alteration in their outward condition, the matter assumes an entirely different complexion, and no man can contend for the parity of the two cases without denying the clearest decisions of reason and common sense.

Persons are doomed to foreign servitude in Africa for various causes, and in a variety of ways. In the great majority of cases it is professedly for crimes or misdemeanors. Murder is

always punished in this way, if a slave factory is within reach. Theft and adultery, although ordinarily doing no great violence to the moral sense of the people, are sure to be magnified into crimes of the deepest dye, if there is any possibility of selling the offender. A refractory wife, if suspected of infidelity to her husband, is very apt to be hurried away to a slave factory before the blood relations can possibly interfere in her behalf.

The most prolific source of all, however, is to be found in the charge of witchcraft. This superstition has an existence in Africa farther back, and entirely independent of the slave trade, and none but those who have been initiated into the mysteries of African life, can form any right conception of the absolute authority which it exercises over that race. The belief in it is one of the first, the deepest and most enduring of all the impressions made upon their childhood. It grows with the growth of every man and woman in the land, and finds something to strengthen its hold upon the popular feeling in every day's experience and observation. It insinuates itself into the usages, the laws, the religion, and indeed into the entire fabric of the moral and social system. It undermines all the deep foundations of society, and keeps every family and community in a state of uneasiness and perturbation. No worse suspicion can possibly affix itself to any man's character. It breaks in twain the strongest bonds that hold human society together. The child is discharged from all filial duty, and the father or mother from all parental obligation, if the slightest taint of this suspicion rests upon the character of either. The brother will denounce the sister, or the sister the brother, if either falls under the condemnation of public opinion. The husband will thrust from his bosom the most cherished wife, if she does not, upon the first insinuation of a suspicion, purge her character by a resort to some of the appointed tests of witchcraft. Hundreds and thousands of innocent men and women are annually put to death in Africa in obedience to the demands of this foul demon. If the slave trader could get to the rescue of this class of persons, and confine his operations to them alone, then indeed his calling would be one of mercy.

But, unfortunately, his presence and avocation but adds fuel to the flame. Direful as are the fruits of this insane superstition, they are rendered ten-fold more so under the stimulation of this cruel traffic. Under its influence the charge of witchcraft is multiplied a hundred fold, and when the work of crimination and recrimination is fairly started in any community, it produces a state of society that scarcely has any parallel, and can neither be described nor understood. Old grudges are started into life, and every possible means is employed to obtain revenge through the medium of this subtle agency. Avarice comes forth in all her might, and hesitates not to ally herself with this all pervading superstition for the accomplishment of her purposes. The defenceless stranger, under the sanction of her authority, is seized upon and hurried away to the slave factory, never to see his home or kindred again. The silent traveler is suddenly seized by men who have way-laid his path, and after a hurried and mock trial, finds himself in the hands of a white man—the representative of the Christian world—who listens to no protestations of innocence, and knows not how to relax his grasp. The unfortunate wife who has incurred the displeasure of her lord, is accused of this great crime, and without the formality of a trial, is handed over to the slave trader, and thus doomed to perpetual servitude in a foreign land. A family burdened with the care of a feeble or idiotic member, will countenance the charge of witchcraft against him by others, for the two-fold object of sharing in the profits of his sale, and getting rid of the care and expense of a burdensome member. A man who has excited the cupidity or the envy of his fellow men by his superior wealth, is liable to be brought under condemnation, and be sent abroad from nothing but a desire for plunder on the part of others. Of course these acts of cruel injustice do not go unrevengeed. Those who bring about the downfall of others, through mere motives of envy or cupidity, must expect to reap the bitter fruits of their own sowing. The friends of the stranger who has been so unceremoniously bartered away, will seek revenge by murdering the chief actor in the affair, or some townsman, and thus throw the whole responsibility

upon the original offender. And when these deeds of retaliation commence, no one can tell where they will end. I have myself heard the midnight discharge of eight or ten muskets in the same neighborhood, each of which told of a slain victim, and all to revenge the sale of a single individual to a slave factory the day before. Indeed, the very presence of a slave factory in any community is but the sign and symbol of perpetual disturbance and petty warfare. Jealousy and distrust reign in every heart, and no one feels secure of life and limb. No man lies down to sleep without planting a loaded musket at the head of his bed. The silence of the night is constantly disturbed by screams that are intended to frighten away lurking enemies. No man will venture fifty rods from his own door during such periods of excitement, without being armed. The women of any town may not venture to the common watering place, or visit their little farms for the purpose of getting the fruits of their previous labors, without being accompanied by an armed escort. The sound of a distant oar, or the rustling of a banyan leaf, will cause a panic of fear, and throw a whole community into the utmost perturbation.

But this disturbed state of society, and these acts of perpetual violence, are scarcely more to be deprecated than the moral insensibility that is engendered by the traffic. Cases do occur, though we are glad for the sake of humanity that they are not very frequent, where parents have consented to the sale of their own children. The other relationships of life are less regarded. I have known two young men from a distant part of the country, professed friends, to visit the neighborhood of a slave factory for the purpose of curiosity, or for general observation, when one has secretly bartered away the other, and gone home and divided the proceeds of his sale with his own friends. It is not uncommon in the history of this business, for a man to find himself in the same barracoon along by the side of individuals whom he himself had sold there only a few days or weeks previously. I have known a company of six or eight men, at the beginning, sworn friends, who have successively conspired against each other, and in almost every

case on the charge of witchcraft, until the last man was sold by some one else, and the whole company carried away in the same cargo. And this state of insensibility and treachery, let it be remembered, is brought about among a people who are naturally kind, affectionate and confiding, and who would live in peace and comparative happiness, if it were not for the disturbing element we have under consideration.

There are great wrongs and injuries also inflicted upon these people during their imprisonment on the sea coast. The owner of the factory intends to be kind to the slaves he has purchased. It is his interest to provide wholesome food, and use all the means the circumstances of the case will allow, to preserve their lives and health. But, unfortunately, he partakes of the insensibility that his avocation almost always produces. Any murmuring or attempt to escape on the part of his imprisoned subjects, is very apt to be punished with instant death—yes! death inflicted without even the formality of a trial, and under circumstances sometimes of great cruelty. Sickness, too, often makes great havoc in the ranks of these unfortunate beings. No sooner does death take place, (and in many cases even before life is extinct,) than the miserable victim is dragged out in the open field, to putrify or to be devoured by beasts. I have myself walked over fields that were strewed with the bones of those who had been thrown out of these factories. There is, or was a few years ago, on the Island of Corisco, a mound of human bones, that were gathered there from a neighboring slave factory, and no doubt many were laid on that pile before the light of reason, or the breath of life, had been extinguished. This is a painful picture, but not more painful than true; and it ought to be attentively considered by those who advocate the revival of this wicked traffic.

Nor do we see how these evils can be materially mitigated by legalizing the traffic. The amount of mortality might be diminished somewhat on the middle passage by the enforcement of proper laws. But no legal enactments can lessen the evils connected with the seizure of these victims. No professions of humanity on the part of the slave dealer, no offers of

ulterior good, can ever induce the African to become a voluntary slave, or consent to be transported to an unknown land. He and his friends, except in a few cases of extreme apathy, will resist every effort to take away his freedom. He loves his home, the wilds and woods in which he has roamed, and he can never be dragged from it except by superior force. The Portuguese missionaries once tried all their powers of persuasion upon the inhabitants of Congo, to induce them to go as voluntary slaves to the Christian land of Brazil, holding up to them the highest spiritual rewards, both in this life and in the life to come, but without having made a single convert to their views. The simple-hearted people of that region could easily be induced to practise most of the outward rites of the Romish Church, but all were irreconcilably averse to becoming slaves in a foreign land, even though that land flowed with milk and honey. The same feeling prevails all over Africa, and always will so long as human nature remains the same. The arrival of a slave ship in any African port is always the occasion of varied associations and painful apprehensions. It awakens in the bosoms of those who hope to share in the pecuniary profits of the traffic, the worst of all the human passions, and there are no deeds of fraud, violence or bloodshed, which they are not ready to perpetrate. The minds of those, on the other hand, who are liable to become its victims, are occupied with the single thought of defending themselves, or escaping out of the reach of the foul monster. The stranger who, perchance, may be in the neighborhood at the time, comes to the conclusion that it is time for him to be bending his steps homeward. The timid wife, especially if her blood relations are in a distant part of the country, carefully cons over, in her own mind, the exact state of feeling existing between her and her lord. The debtor feels that his is a critical position, and he is on the *qui vive* lest his seizure be the inauguration of new relations with his creditor. In short, all the bonds of social life are dissolved, and the community, for the time being, must live in a state of the utmost strife and perturbation.

Now, we would ask, is it possible for honorable, Christian men, to lend their countenance to such business? Will the

high-minded men of the South consent to obtain laborers for their plantations on such terms? Are there no other ways by which an honorable living may be obtained? Shall we, knowingly and deliberately, sanction all the marauding, pillaging, kidnapping and murdering, that are inseparably connected with the traffic? What though Northern merchants are ready to advance their money and employ their ships in the traffic, does this alter the true complexion of the affair? Can the prosperity of the South be promoted in no other way than by reducing the Continent of Africa to a scene of perpetual tumult and warfare?

To those who regard this traffic with allowance on the score of the advantages which these people derive from being brought to this country, we reply that there are other ways and means of improving their condition than by forcing them through this terrible ordeal. The very fact that they have made progress here, shows their capacity for improvement elsewhere. If they are susceptible of religious impressions here, and have risen to a higher scale of social and intellectual improvement, why may they not, under proper influences, make the same progress in Africa? It is not pretended that they ever will rise to a full equality, in all respects, with the Anglo-Saxon or other white races. There are certain traits in the African, as there are among other branches of the human family, which will always assign him a different place in the scale of civilization. He may never rival the energy, the enterprise or the ingenuity of the white man, but there is nothing to prevent his becoming a virtuous, intelligent Christian citizen, and in some of the milder graces of our nature he may, under proper training, be as far ahead of the white man as he is behind him in the sterner virtues. Nor are these mere matters of speculation. We have, in Western Africa, at the present time, the clearest evidence of a desire and capacity for improvement in all parts of the country that have been disengaged from the trammels of the slave trade. The proof of this is to be found in the great augmentation of her commercial resources, during the last quarter of a century, and especially in the production of palm oil, cotton, and various

other articles of equal value. But there is still higher proof of this in the decided success which has attended the efforts of missionaries to promote the cause of Christian education among them. We cannot go into details here without extending our article to an undue length. But we have no hesitation in affirming, that the Gospel has made as strong an impression upon the natives of Africa, and brought about as important results in proportion to the amount of means employed, as upon the same race in this country, or any other portion of the human race whatever. Is it nothing that nearly one hundred Christian churches have been founded, and more than 15,000 native converts have been gathered into those churches in the last twenty-five years? Is it nothing that there are now two hundred Christian schools in full operation along that coast, and more than 20,000 native youths receiving a Christian education in those schools? Is it nothing that twenty different dialects have been studied out and reduced to writing, into most of which large portions of the Sacred Scriptures have been translated and circulated? Is it no token of encouragement that scores of native Africans are now actively and effectively engaged in teaching and preaching, who, twenty years ago, were but naked savage boys? Let these measures be sustained and multiplied according to the ability of the Christian Church in this and other Christian lands, and, by the blessing of God, Africa will soon become a peaceful, happy and prosperous land. Restore the slave trade, and all these bright prospects, humanly speaking, will be swept away, and a darker cloud will settle down upon that land than ever before rested upon it.