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 practice most of the outward rights 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, kidnaping 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 facts 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?

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

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2. June 1841 (n.s. I, 1)--May 1861 (n.s. X, 24)

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