

Resource Sheet #1

A Picture of Slavery for Youth By Jonathan Walker 184-?

My Young Friends:

Do you know what slavery is? or what that kind of slavery is which is practised in this country, and with which we are connected? If you have never lived where you have seen people compelled to work day after day, month after month, and year after year, without having suitable victuals and clothes to satisfy their pressing wants--made to submit to all the demands of wicked and cruel masters, mistresses, overseers, or drivers--whipped, chained, bought and sold like cattle, and separated from brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and children;--I say, if you have not seen this, you cannot know correctly what slavery is; neither can I tell you, so that you can understand it properly. Although I have been acquainted with this horrid system more than twenty years, I cannot describe it. It can only be known as it is, by seeing and feeling its cruelty, as do the slaves themselves. But I intend to give you a little knowledge of it, by such means as I have at command, in this little book.

The laws, which are made by wicked and cruel men chosen by the people for that purpose, declare

1 as follows:--"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law, to be chattels personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, their executors, administrators and assigns, TO ALL INTENTS, CONSTRUCTIONS, AND PURPOSES WHATSOEVER."

Now, don't you see this law makes them just as much property as horses and oxen are, and that they are liable to be used as other property, and for any purpose? And, therefore, people buy, sell and trade in them, as you will perceive by the following advertisements taken from American newspapers:--

"For Sale, a Man, who is well acquainted with running a steam saw-mill. Those who wish to purchase such a BOY,* would do well to apply to Thomas H. Merrill."
[Note : * Black men are called boys at the South.]

"Wanted to purchase, two first-rate Seamstresses, not over 22 years of age. Apply to Douglass & Philpot."

"120 Negroes for Sale.--The subscriber has *just arrived from Petersburg, Virginia*, with one hundred and twenty *likely young* negroes, of both sexes and every description, which he offers for sale on the most reasonable terms.

"The lot now on hand consists of plough-boys, several likely and well-qualified house servants of both sexes, several *women with children*, *small girls* suitable for nurses, and several SMALL BOYS WITHOUT THEIR MOTHERS. Planters and traders are earnestly requested to give the subscriber a call previously to making purchases elsewhere, as he is enabled and will sell as cheap or cheaper, than can be sold by any person in the trade."

"Great Bargains.--Splendid Property on Long Credit--a full set of FIRST-RATE Mechanics, a large stock of horses and mules," &c.

HORSES SLAVES 8

OTHER CATTLE

Sold Here.

My husband they have sold;

Alas! the bitter day!

Too true to leave me willingly,

They forced him far away.

Our prattling infants, too,--

Most piercing thought of all,--

Sold into cruel strangers' hands,

What evils may befall!

I pray, O God, that thou

Wouldst take them from the earth;

I ask their death, who once from thee,

More madly, asked their birth.

One thing at least I trust,

My only hope it is,

There'll be no slavery in the world

That follows after this.

These pictures represent a very common way of selling slaves. I have been in sight of these vendues often, but always turned away, because it made my heart ache to see them sold.

Look at the pictures, and see if they do not correspond with the following advertisement:--

"Will be sold at Public Auction, without reserve, Elliott, 35 years of age; Tom, 14 years of age, yellow; Claring, 17 years of age, with child, born Aug. 17, 1837; Charlotte, 19 years of age; Mahaly, 13 years of age. Will be sold together, or separately, in lots to suit purchasers. F. H. Dolbeare & CO., *Auct'rs.*"

Thus the mother and children are sold together, or separately, as the purchaser may choose.

All the following described persons are taken from advertisements of property, as offered for sale:--

"Stevedore, boat-hand, carpenter, drayman, cartman, axeman, sawyer, butcher, farmer, seamstress, ostler, washer and ironer, cooper, blacksmith, gardener, driver, bricklayer, steamboat fireman, sadler, teamster, laundress, painter, tailor, cabin-boy, wagoner, pilot, plater, cook, child's nurse, &c."

Now cast your eye on the following representation of a slave auction in Richmond, Virginia, and ask what these people have done, that they should be treated in this manner!

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