

Richmond, Va. 21st Mo. 21st Mo.

Thurs day 11th Mo. 21st Mo. Though anxious to get to Baltimore to receive my home letters, it does not appear right to omit attending the meeting here tomorrow in usual course; and we have, this morning, taken a walk into the City, and again looked into the slave market. Coming near to the Blue Bell tavern, where the auction rooms for the poor slaves ~~are~~ situated, we soon discovered the little red flag — the usual signal for a sale — out, at two rooms. The ticket on the first announced the sale of twelve, — and that on the other — of four negroes. We went into both the rooms: there the poor things — male and female — upgrown and children — were sitting or standing by the fire. The dealers, or traders as they are more commonly called, gradually came together around the poor creatures, that were to be put up for sale; — opened their mouths, — examined their teeth, — felt about their persons; — asked their questions, &c. &c. About 10 o'clock the first sale commenced: a girl about 14, was placed upon the platform: — the auctioneer — the same we had seen last year — took his stand beside her, and the biddings began. One came and examined her; another came, and felt all over her; another asked her to step down, and walk back and forth across the room to show her "action"; &c. The poor girl did not seem to mind it much; though I thought the forced smile which was drawn forth scarcely concealed the sorrow which — now and then — marked her countenance. After protracted biddings and repeated examinations, she was "knocked down" at 150 dollars. I followed her to the store by which her purchases placed her, but she did not appear to be much distressed. The next "put up" was a fine, ^{large} looking, well-dressed little boy, about twelve. Poor fellow! — he seemed unconscious of his lot, and looked around quite cheerfully: — allowed himself to be examined and questioned without any apparent emotion. The biddings went on pretty rapidly; and he was sold for 315 dollars. Another little boy, about the same age and size, was next placed on the platform: his complexion was much fairer, and he had light and uncurled hair. The tears streamed down in torrents from his large eyes; and the efforts ^{assistingly to the} made by the auctioneer — himself a coloured man — to encourage and cheer him, only seemed to increase his distress.

thought of my own dear boys; and my heart was deeply moved. I spoke to a gentlemanly-looking man who stood near me; and who, though himself a trader, had noticed us as strangers, and appeared disposed to give us all the information he could; but he thought the poor little boy's emotion arose from the "novelty of the scene": he was "naturally affected at seeing so many people about him":

The auctioneer knocked him down for 305 dollars while we were talking: and a man who was advertised being withdrawn — that sale was ended. We crossed the street to the other mart; and soon saw another lot of our fellow-creatures men mounted upon the elevated platform. It was a mother, and three children, — two little boys and a girl — from 5 to 10 or 11 years old. The poor mother did not appear strong, and had a downcast distressed look. The children appeared delicate. They were not much examined, and the biddings went on heavily. 920 dollars was the last bid; and, no one appearing willing to advance upon it, the owner withdrew them; — not disposed to take that price: the market was declared to be too dull for sale, and none of the others were brought forward: the auction ended.

From conversation with the person alluded to above, who kept near us and seemed disposed to pay us marked attention, we learned that the prospects in the South were gloomy. Cotton was low, and other produce not remunerative; and the demand for slaves consequently slack. He said he bought and sold 500 slaves annually. He told him of our having visited Hope Slater's establishment at Baltimore. He replied that he had a slave-jail himself not far off; and should be glad to let us look over it. He was well acquainted with Nathaniel Crenshaw, and expressed himself very fully and freely on the impolicy of the system. I alluded to the moral and religious views connected with it. "Yes" he said, "apart from all these, the system is bad and ruinous; — and he should be glad to have another means of getting a living: most of the traders, his fellow-dealers, were tired of the business, and the general opinion was against it. He believed that, had it not been for the irritating conduct of some of the violent abolitionists of the North, they would now have been pursuing a system of gradual emancipation, both in this state and Maryland, Kentucky and Tennessee. Though I am not

disposed to take for granted all that slave-holders and slave-traders say upon this subject, I cannot but think that Abolitionists may profit by such things. Whilst the rights of the poor slaves should be unflinchingly maintained and their wrongs sought to be redressed, it must not be forgotten by Christians that much sympathy is due for (not with) those who are so unhappily involved, by inheritance - many of them - in a system that entails upon themselves so much suffering as well as sin; from which they can hardly be expected to extricate themselves without being raised to a much higher moral and religious standing than the one they now occupy; and this cannot be done by selling and abusing. I have been surprised to find to what extent and with what freedom and readiness many are willing to admit the wrong of the whole system when you come to talk kindly and coolly to them; and there is much to hope from mild and persevering efforts to keep the subject before the public mind. Though we have this day again seen enough of slavery to harrow up our feelings to a very painful degree, we have but looked upon the surface of the evil. Draw aside the ~~red~~ veil, and look a little deeper into all ~~the~~ its ramifications of demoralizing - debasing - brutalizing atrocity constantly enacted ^{amongst} ~~against~~ the black and white population, - and you cannot help shrinking at the amount of sin and wickedness with which it teems, - day by day - continually.

Bacon Fart, our new acquaintance, having given us an invitation we walked down with him to his "jail". He unlocked the door and rang a bell; and nearly thirty men, women and children, ranged themselves in a row before us. They looked well-cared-for, as to food and clothing; and appeared cheerful. One young man wished very much that we would buy him. We examined their day and sleeping apartments; and all seemed well adapted to secure as much comfort as the poor things are accustomed to; but it was a "slave jail", where there is ^{brethren,} ~~as the same~~ flesh and blood, and souls immortal, with our selves, were kept to be sold. Several private buyers came in whilst we were there.

and, just as we were going away, ^x Hope Slater entered the place. I went up to speak to him: he did not at first recognize us; but soon recollected our visit to his "jail" at Baltimore. He said he had entirely withdrawn from the trade, and would have nothing more to do with it. He acknowledged that, during his connection with the trade, he had sold 10,000 slaves: and it was a satisfaction to him ~~that~~ to think that he had been the means of bettering the condition of most of these. I endeavoured to turn his attention to the system which he had supported notwithstanding these considerations, which, as far as they went, might afford him some satisfaction. He took it kindly, and we parted with the renewed conviction upon my mind that many of these "better sort of traders" find it hard to kick against the pricks, notwithstanding the pains they take to turn the keen edge of conviction; and would be glad to escape from an atmosphere in which even they cannot breathe free.

For the sake of the white people as well as the poor coloured brethren of these states, it is much to be desired that every prudent and Christian measure should be adopted and steadily pursued with untiring zeal, well-tempered, rightly to bring home the great question to the understandings, hearts and consciences of those who have influence within their own communities, who can react powerfully upon public opinion, and operate upon the different State legislatures. We know that the ways of Providence are just finding out; but if the evil is to be cured peaceably, there appears to be no way more likely to promote the object than endeavouring to win — Americans will not be driven — to win the men of influence over to right views, and a right line of action based upon them.

We came back to dinner at Mary P. Ladd's: and spent the evening in writing. I sent a few lines to Doctor Thomas informing him of our intention to be at his house at Baltimore on fifth day.

^x Jos had much conversation with this man when he visited his jail - last year.