

**AN EXPOSITION OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE
TRADE FROM THE YEAR 1840 TO 1850,
INCLUSIVE. PREPARED FROM OFFICIAL
DOCUMENTS, AND PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION
OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RELIGIOUS
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS IN PENNSYLVANIA, NEW
JERSEY, AND DELAWARE**

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VARIOUS

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P R E F A C E .

In the preparation of the following pages, we have relied for authority chiefly on the "Slave Trade Papers," presented to both Houses of Parliament in Great Britain, and by them ordered to be published.

The papers of each year are divided into four classes, A, B, C and D, each constituting a volume, to which reference is made in noting our extracts. Some extracts have likewise been taken from the printed evidence, given before the Committees of Parliament, appointed on the Slave Trade question.

Most of the important testimony, relating to the participation of American citizens in the traffic, is derived from official communications of foreign ministers and officers of the United States, many of them having been published by direction of the Senate.

AN EXPOSITION
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It cannot be denied, that the African Slave trade had its origin from, and owes its continuance to, the cupidity of unprincipled men. Its first steps are indelibly marked with violence and bloodshed, and every subsequent stage is inseparably connected with misery and suffering—landing both the victims and their oppressors in degradation and wretchedness. So generally is the knowledge of these facts spread throughout the world, that there are none among the nations professing Christianity, and but few of those styled barbarous, who have not either altogether prohibited their citizens from engaging in the traffic, or enacted laws to restrain them in its prosecution, and to regulate the mode in which it may be carried on, so as in some measure to diminish its horrors. Few governments have taken more decided ground in this respect, or placed upon their statute book laws more stringent, or more unequivocal against any of its citizens engaging, or being in any way interested, in the African Slave trade, than have these United States.

So early as 1794, an Act was passed, prohibiting under a severe penalty, any citizen or other person residing within the United States, from building or equipping any vessel for the purpose of carrying on the traffic in slaves to any foreign country, or for the purpose of transporting slaves from one foreign country to another; and in 1798, 1800, and 1803, respectively, laws were enacted, defining this offence in its several forms, and more particularly, seeking to guard, by penalties of fine, forfeiture and imprisonment, against any of those residing within

the jurisdiction of the United States, being implicated in, or accessory to its commission.

In 1807, a law was enacted, totally prohibiting the importation into any part of the United States, from any foreign country, of any negro, mulatto, or person of colour, for the purpose of holding or selling such person as a slave; and also prohibiting any citizen, or other person residing within the country from building, equipping, or preparing within its jurisdiction, any vessel to be employed in the importation of slaves into the United States; and forbidding all from engaging in such importation. Severe penalties were attached to the infraction of these laws; and in 1818, the same penalties were extended to the act of preparing vessels for the transportation of slaves to any place whatever.

These various Acts failing to effect all that was desired, a law was passed in 1820, declaring that any citizen of the United States, being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign vessel engaged in the Slave trade; or any person whatever, being of the crew of a vessel owned wholly or in part by, or navigated for or on behalf of, any citizen of the United States, who shall land on any foreign shore, and seize any negro or mulatto, not held to service by the laws of any state or territory of the United States; or who shall decoy, or forcibly bring on board such vessel, any such negro or mulatto, with intent of holding such negro or mulatto as a slave; every such person so offending, shall be adjudged a pirate, and on conviction thereof shall suffer death. This law also provides, that if any citizen of the United States, being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign vessel engaged in the slave trade, or any person whatever, being of the ship's company of any vessel, owned wholly or in part by, or navigated on behalf of, any citizen of the United States, shall forcibly confine or detain, or shall abet in forcibly confining or detaining, on board any such vessel, any negro or mulatto, not held to service or labour by the laws of either of the states or territories of the United States, with intent to make such negro or mulatto a slave; or shall on board any such vessel, offer or attempt to sell as a slave, any negro or mulatto not

held to service as aforesaid; or shall on the high seas, or any where on tide water, transfer or deliver over to any other ship or vessel, any negro or mulatto, not held to service as aforesaid, with intent to make such negro or mulatto a slave; or shall land or deliver on shore, from on board such ship or vessel, any such negro or mulatto, with intent to make sale of, or having previously sold such negro or mulatto as a slave, such citizen or person shall be adjudged a pirate, and on conviction thereof shall suffer death.

In the year 1807, after long and persevering exertions on the part of Clarkson, Wilberforce and many others, an Act was passed by the British Parliament, prohibiting the subjects of that government from any participation in the African Slave trade. Since that period, other laws have been passed more effectually to secure the design of that act, and by which those engaging in that trade were declared guilty of felony; and in 1824, that traffic was by the statutes of that country, as it is by the United States, declared to be piracy.

Since 1807, the year in which she first prohibited her own subjects from engaging in the slave trade, Great Britain has repeatedly urged the subject upon the attention of the different powers, both in Europe and America, with whom treaties have been made by her, and solicited them to co-operate with her in its complete extinction.

In 1813, Sweden bound herself by treaty, not to permit her subjects to engage in the trade; and Denmark, whose king so early as 1792, had issued a decree prohibiting his subjects from purchasing, selling or transporting slaves, acquiesced in the justice of the measure, and prohibited the trade absolutely by her municipal laws.

France, Austria, Russia and Prussia, in reply to the suggestions of the British ministers, expressed their abhorrence of the traffic, and their determination to co-operate in its abolition. In the treaties of Paris, Kiël and Ghent, in 1814, it was stipulated that the odious traffic in slaves from Africa should be abolished, which stipulation was confirmed by the Congress of the Allied Powers at Vienna in 1815, and they declared their