

The White Slave Traffic.

The *ebon savages* of the African Continent are not the only race who are made merchandise of by their fellow men. Neither is the African Slave-trade the only abomination of the kind that exists under the sun. The mountain-land of Circassia, a part of that region which extends from the Euxine to the Caspian, is inhabited by a people who have ever been distinguished for symmetry of form and beauty of feature, and the maidens of this highly favored race have for centuries been objects of the slave-dealers' cupidity, on account of the great demand which has existed for them among the lascivious and polygamous Turks. Between the parents and relatives of these Circassian hours and the dealers in question an infamous traffic has been carried on, and the slave-markets of Constantinople and the other cities of the Ottoman Empire have, in this way, been supplied with females who have become the ornaments of the Mahometan harems, and the mothers of Mahometan sovereigns and nobles.

From the period when Russia obtained dominion over the coast of the Caucasus up to the outbreak of the late war, she did everything in her power to put a stop to this disgraceful commerce, and her efforts at destroying it were attended with considerable success. But, since the influence of the Turks and their allies became predominant in that quarter, the shameful traffic has revived, and is now again in a very flourishing condition. Flourishing, however, as it is, the days of its prosperity are happily numbered. Russia will presently resume her supremacy over the Caucasian Coast, and then her efforts, as of old, will be directed to the suppression of this *white* Slave-trade. The conviction that the power of Russia will be thus employed, has filled the *women-sellers* of Circassia with despair; and, according to the Constantinople correspondent of the *London Morning Post*, there is no expedient which desperation or cupidity can suggest to them that they are not at the present moment making use of, in order to avert the impending catastrophe; and, lest that should be impossible, to draw an *extra* profit from their odious avocation, while it is allowable to do so.

Under the impression that Turkey is still a power upon earth, a deputation of these people are even now at the Court of the Sultan entreating ABDUL MEDJID to extend theegis of protection over the Circassian soil, and to preserve to its inhabitants their ancient and hereditary commerce. Apprehensive of their mission failing, and uncertain as to the time when a Russian ukase shall be issued against them, they have poured such a multitude of slaves into the markets of Turkey that they have completely defeated the object which their cupidity has had in view. The supply is now so over-proportioned to the demand that a slave can be almost bought in Constantinople for a *song*, and is no longer a source of *gain*, but of *loss* to her owner. "Never, perhaps, at any former period," says the correspondent in question,

"Was *white* human flesh so cheap as it is at this moment. There is an absolute glut in the market, and dealers are obliged to *throw away* their goods owing to the extent of the supply. In former times 'a good middling' Circassian girl was thought very cheap at £100, but at the present moment the same description of goods may be had for £5! In fact the creatures are eating their heads off, and must be disposed of at any sacrifice, however alarming."

Now we should rejoice at the failure of the slave-dealers' speculation, were slave-dealers alone the sufferers. But it unfortunately happens that that failure has proved not less injurious to the interests of *slaves in general* than to the interests of *slave-dealers*. The great depreciation in the value of Circassian maidens has tended very much to *embitter* the lot of the whole slave population of the Ottoman Empire. Formerly when a Circassian girl brought a *good* price, she was pretty sure of being bought into a respectable family, where not only *kind* treatment, but often *rank* and *fortune* awaited her. With *low* prices, however, a *low* class of purchasers have come into the market, and now she is liable to be taken by any huckster who never thought of keeping a slave before, and who may subject her to drudgery and oppression. But female slaves of the negro race are still greater sufferers from the overtrading in question than even the Circassians. Since Circassians became so cheap, every Turk has grown ambitious of possessing *white* slaves, and in order to make room for them in his household, or to make up the means of purchasing them, aged negresses that have been years in the family have been cruelly discarded and sent to the *slave-brokers for sale!*

Such are some of the hardships and enormities that have sprung from the cupidity and over-speculation of the Circassian slave-dealers, and all these things have been taking place under the eyes of the Sultan's Christian allies—nations who have expended millions of money in maintaining squadrons in the Atlantic Ocean, to put down the African slave-trade. But the days of that commerce, we trust, are numbered. In a *little time* the influence of Russia will again prevail on the eastern coast of the Euxine, and her efforts will again be directed towards the suppression of a traffic which has for centuries made that great sea a highway of cruelty.