African peoples still had sufficient common experiences to enable them to cooperate in the New World in fashioning new customs and traditions which reflected their African background. To be sure, there were at least two acculturative processes going on side by side in the New World. As Africans of different experiences lived together, there was an interaction of the various African cultures. This produced a somewhat different set of customs and practices, but these were still manifestly rooted deep in the African experience. This was especially true where large numbers of Africans resided in the same place, as in the Sea Islands, where they could preserve certain religious practices and even language patterns. At the same time, there was the interaction of African and Western cultures, which doubtless changed the cultural patterns of both groups. It is to be remembered that European institutions did not exist everywhere with the same degree of fixity, and where European practices were relatively weak the opportunities for African survivals were correspondingly strengthened.

In the cultural conflict that took place in the New World following the introduction of Africans, the acculturative process varied in different places and under different circumstances. In some places it was all but stymied where there was a sufficient consensus of experience among Africans to take the Western culture and reinterpret it almost wholly in terms of their own experiences. In other places, mainly Brazil and some Caribbean islands, successful revolts made possible the transplantation of an African way of life to a considerable degree. Elsewhere, the normal or gradual development of the process can be observed, but always at least some survival of African culture is obvious. When it comes to measuring or evaluating the persistence of African culture in the New World—and especially in the United States—the problem becomes much more difficult. It can be seen in the language in such words as "yam," "goober," "canoe," and "banjo." In literature the persistence of African culture can be seen in the folk tales that have been recorded in recent years by American writers. In religion there are divinations and various cult practices, some of which can be traced to the African background. In work, in play, in social organizations, and in various aesthetic manifestations there are some evidences of African culture.

The survival of varying degrees of African culture in America does not suggest that there has been only a limited adjustment of Africans to the New World situation. On the contrary, it merely points up the fact that they came out of an experience that was sufficiently entrenched to make possible the persistence of some customs and traditions. There is a certain amount of validity in the view that in the conflict of cultures only those practices will survive whose value and superiority give them the strength and tenacity to do so. African survivals in America also suggest a pronounced resiliency in African institutions. There had been sufficient intertribal and interstate intercourse to give Africans the important experience of adopting many of the practices of those with whom they came in contact while at the same time retaining much of their earlier way of life.

CHAPTER 3

The Slave Trade and the New World

European and Asian Interests

When the Christians of Western Europe began to turn their attention to the slave trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were not introducing a new practice. Although they displayed much originality in approach and technique, they were engaging in a pursuit that had been a concern for countless centuries. As a matter of fact, slavery was widespread during the earliest known history of Africa as well as of other continents. Doubtless there was cruelty and oppression in African slavery as there was anywhere that the institution developed. At least in some portions of Africa there was no racial basis of slavery. The Egyptians enslaved whatever peoples they captured. At times they were Semitic, at times Mediterranean, and at other times blacks from Nubia. Slavery in the Greek and Roman empires is well known. In both periods the traffic in human beings from western Asia and North Africa brought a continuous stream of slaves to perform personal services and to till the fields for the ruling class. Neither in Greece nor Rome was menial service regarded as degrading. The opportunities for education and cultural advancement were, therefore, opened up to slaves. It was not unusual to find in this class people possessing a degree of intelligence and training not usually associated with slaves.

When the Muslims invaded Africa, they contributed greatly to the development of the institution of slavery by seizing women for their harems and men for military and menial service. By purchase as well as by conquest, the Muslims recruited African slaves and shipped them off to Arabia, Persia, or some other Islamic land. As kings and princes embraced Islam, they cooperated with the Arabians in the exportation of human cargo. Long before the extensive development of the slave trade by Europeans, many of the basic practices of the international slave trade had already been established. It is to be noted, however, that slavery among the Muslims was not an institution utilized primarily for the production of goods from which wealth could be derived. There were no extensive cotton, tobacco, and sugarcane fields in Arabia, Persia, and Egypt. Slaves in these lands were essentially servants, and the extent of the demand for them depended in a large measure on the wealth of the potential masters. Slavery was, therefore, a manifestation of wealth, and the institution showed little of the harshness and severity that it possessed in areas where it was itself the foundation on which wealth was built. Although becoming Muslims did not release slaves from their duties, it did have the effect of elevating their standing and enhancing their dignity among others. While in the face of continued enslavement this was of doubtful value, it could have been viewed by slaves of a later and a more ruthless system as a straw to which to clutch.

It was the forces let loose by the Renaissance and the Commercial Revolution that created the modern institution of slavery and the slave trade. The Renaissance provided a new kind of freedom—the freedom to pursue those ends that would be most beneficial to the soul and the body. It developed into such a passionate search that it resulted in the destruction of long-established practices and beliefs and even in the destruction of the rights of others to pursue the same ends for their own benefit. As W. E. B. Du Bois has pointed out, it was the freedom to destroy freedom, the freedom of some to exploit the rights of others. If, then, people were determined to be free, who was there to tell them that they were not entitled to enslave others?

Coupled with this new concept of freedom was the revitalized economic life of Europe that was brought forth by the Commercial Revolution. The breakdown of feudalism, the rise of towns, the heightened interest in commercial activities, and the new recognition of the strength and power of capital, all of which were essential elements of the Commercial Revolution, brought about a type of competition characterized by ruthless exploitation of any commodities that could be viewed as economic goods. The rise of powerful national states in Western Europe—Spain, France, Portugal, Britain, and, later, Holland—provided the political instrumentalities through which these new forces could be channeled. While the state acted as referee for competitors within its borders, it also served to stimulate competition between its own merchants and traders and those of other countries. The spirit of the Renaissance, with its sanction of ruthless freedom, and the practices of the Commercial Revolution, with its new techniques of exploitation, conspired to bring forth new approaches to the acquisition of wealth and power. Among these was establishment of the institution of modern slavery and the concomitant practice of importing and exporting slaves.

Doubtless, some Africans who were sold to the east and north during the period of Muslim domination found their way into the markets of Western Europe. It was not until the end of the fourteenth century, however, that Europeans themselves began to bring slaves into Europe. Both Spanish and Portuguese sailors were exploring the coast of Africa in the wake of the great wave of expansionism that had swept over Europe. They went to the Canary Islands and to innumerable ports on the mainland as far as the Gulf of Guinea. They took Africans to Europe and made servants of them, feeling justified in doing so because Africans would thereby have the opportunity to cast off their heathenism and embrace the Christian religion. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Europeans were selling in their home markets many African commodities, among them nuts, fruit, olive oil, gold, and slaves. Within a very few years, the slave trade became an accepted and profitable part of European commerce. Largely under the encouragement of Prince Henry, the sailors and merchants of Portugal early saw the economic advantages that the African slave trade afforded. By the time of his death in 1460, 700 or 800 slaves were being transported to Portugal annually.

The last half of the fifteenth century may be considered the years of preparation in the history of the slave trade. Europeans, mainly Spaniards and Portuguese, were establishing orderly trade relations with Africans and were erecting forts and trading posts from which to carry on their business. It was the period in which Europeans were becoming accustomed to having black Africans do their work and were exploring the possibilities of finding new tasks for them. Europeans were attempting to settle among themselves the question of who should and who should not engage in the traffic, and the mad scramble for monopoly even before the close of the century is indicative of the importance with which that traffic was regarded. Finally, this was the period in which Europeans developed a rationalization for their deeds based on Christianity. The Portuguese and the Spaniards led Europeans in invoking the missionary zeal of Christianity to justify their activities on the African coast. If they were chaining Africans together for the purpose of consigning them to a lifetime of enforced servitude, it was a "holy cause" in which they had the blessings of both their king and their church.

There was never any profitable future for African slavery in Europe. Although Europe was undergoing drastic economic change in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, its new economic institutions did not utilize Africans on a sufficiently large scale to make the trade excessively profitable. Banking houses, shipyards, mercantile establishments, and the homes of the newly rich could use only a limited number of slaves. To be sure, there were many jobs to be performed, but the large white population that was dispossessed of land by the enclosure movement in England and on the Continent was in search of employment. If there were jobs to be filled, these impecunious Europeans claimed them for themselves. But the new era in economic development ushered in some activities in which Africans could perhaps be used. It was too much to expect that these activities would be confined to Europe as international competition developed. The search for new trade routes, new lands, and new commodities provided the opportunities for the use of African slaves that Europeans had been looking for. It was the New World with its vast natural resources and its undeveloped regions that could make slavery and the slave trade profitable, if indeed it could be profitable anywhere.

Africans in the New World

As early as 1920, when Harvard professor Leo Wiener published *Africa and the Discovery of America*, scholars advanced the view that Africans inhabited the New World before Columbus. Wiener and several scholars who followed him (notably Ivan Van Sertima, whose *They Came Before Columbus* was published in 1976) said that numerous evidences of trade and other contacts between Africa and the New World indicate that Africans, not Europeans, were the pioneers of the transatlantic West. Using linguistic as well as archaeological and historical evidence, they vigorously argued their case. Van Sertima declares, for example, that "the case for African contacts with pre-Columbian America . . . is grounded now upon an overwhelming and growing body of reliable witnesses." Although most scholars have not yet accepted these claims, it is not so much because the arguments are not convincing as it is their refusal to deny claims that had become deeply entrenched conventional wisdom for more than four centuries. Consequently the traditional story of the coming of Africans to the New World remains essentially unchanged.

From the very beginning of European exploits in the New World, Africans came as explorers, servants, and slaves. Even if Pedro Alonso Niño of Columbus's crew was not a Negro as has been claimed, there were many blacks who accompanied other European explorers to the New World. As early as 1501, Spain relinquished her earlier ban and permitted Africans to go to Spanish lands in the New World. Thirty Africans, including Nuflo de Olano, were with Balboa when he discovered the Pacific Ocean. Cortés carried blacks with him into Mexico, and one of them planted and harvested the first wheat crop in the New World. Two accompanied Velas in 1520. When Alvarado went to Quito, he took 200 blacks with him. They were with Pizarro on his Peruvian expedition and carried him to the cathedral after he was murdered. The Africans in the expeditions of Almagro and Valdivia saved their Spanish masters from the Indians in 1525.

As Spanish and Portuguese explorers moved into the interior of North America, Africans assisted in the undertakings. They were with Alarcón and Coronado in the conquest of New Mexico. They accompanied Narváez on his expedition of 1527 and were with Cabeza de Vaca in the exploration of the southwestern part of the present United States. One of the outstanding African explorers was Estevanico, who opened up New Mexico and Arizona for the Spaniards. Little Stephen, as Estevanico was known among his fellows, proceeded into the interior and sent back wooden crosses to indicate his progress. When his crosses increased in size until they were as tall as a man, the Spaniards realized that Estevanico had experienced great success. Indians brought news of Little Stephen's approach to the fabulous seven cities about which so much had been heard. Shortly after Stephen entered the city, the Indians killed him, believing him to be an imposter when he said that he was the emissary of two white men. Although Estevanico was murdered, he had prepared the way for the conquest of the Southwest by the Spaniards.

Africans were with the French in their explorations of the New World. In Canadian expeditions, they were with the Jesuit missionaries. When the great conquest of the Mississippi Valley was undertaken by the French in the seventeenth century, Africans constituted a substantial portion of the pioneers who settled in the region. Around 1790, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a French-speaking black, erected the first building in a place that came to be known as Chicago. While Africans did not accompany the English on their explorations in the New World, it is not without ironic significance that they were extensively engaged in the task of opening the New World for European development. If blacks helped to raise the curtain on the drama of economic life in the New World, they were to play an even more important part in the exploitation of its resources. Once fastened to a lifetime status of slavery, they became an integral part of the economic life of both the Old World and the New.

When the countries of Europe undertook to develop the New World, they were interested primarily in the exploitation of its natural resources. Labor was obviously necessary, and the cheaper the better. It was only natural that Indians, readily available, would be the first to be used. Europeans displayed excessive inhumanity in the employment of Indian slaves in the mines of Haiti, while working in the fields of the Caribbean almost exterminated them. The great susceptibility of Indians to the diseases carried by Europeans and their simple economic background did not prepare them for the disciplined regimen of the plantation system, which all but eliminated them as workers in the economic system that the Europeans established. Nowhere was Indian slavery profitable. Even if it had been, it would have been insufficient for the robust agricultural life that the European colonies were fostering in the seventeenth century. Other sources of labor supply would have to be tapped if agricultural development in the New World was not to be retarded by an insufficiency of workers. The search for acceptable workers in large quantities became a major preoccupation of the English and Spanish colonists in the seventeenth century.

Although Africans were present in Europe in considerable numbers in the seventeenth century and had been in the New World since at least 1501, European imperialists did not at first regard them as a solution to their labor problems. To be sure, Africans were being employed, but colonists and their Old World sponsors were extremely slow in recognizing them as the best possible labor force for the tasks in the New World. Before they came to see this, they resorted to the poor whites of Europe. In the first half of the seventeenth century, they brought landless, penniless whites over to do the work of clearing the forests and cultivating the fields. When the supply of those who voluntarily indentured themselves for a period of years proved insufficient, the English resorted to more desperate means. Their desperation is clearly seen in the emergence of the wide-spread practice of kidnapping children, women, prisoners, and drunken men. Eric Williams has indicated that the horrors these people experienced on the journey to the New World equaled those experienced by any group before or after. In the English colonies many landlords sought to reduce these servants to the status of slaves. Only gradually did servants achieve a position of respectability in the colonies.

England came to realize that white servants were unsatisfactory. There was the fear that they might become more interested in industry than in agriculture to the detriment of England. Even with all the means used to recruit workers, the supply was still insufficient as the tobacco, rice, and indigo plantations had an almost insatiable appetite for laborers. The terms of service of indentured people were a source of constant irritation for all concerned. Not only did servants chafe under the requirement of remaining until their indenture expired, but many went so far as to sue masters and ship captains for illegal detention. Many of them ran away, and since others of their ilk were migrating into unsettled lands, it became increasingly difficult, as well as expensive, to apprehend them once they had fled. The English began to ask themselves why they should be concerned with white servants when blacks presented so few of the difficulties encountered with whites. Because of their color, Africans could be easily apprehended. Furthermore, they could be purchased outright and a master's labor supply would not be in a state of constant fluctuation. Blacks, from a pagan land and without exposure to the ethical ideals of Christianity, could be handled with more rigid methods of discipline and could be morally and spiritually degraded for the sake of stability on the plantation. In the long run, African slaves were actually cheaper. In a period when economic considerations were so vital, this was especially important. African slavery, then, became a fixed institution, a solution to one of the most difficult New World problems. With the supply of Africans apparently inexhaustible, there would be no more worries about labor. European countries could look back with gratitude to the first of their nationals who explored the coasts of Africa and brought this black gold to Europe. It was the key to the solution of one of America's most pressing problems. At the same time it erected for Europeans one more important economic institution, the slave trade. As perhaps the last major development in the Commercial Revolution, it was in itself a source of great wealth for those who would engage in the traffic of human souls.

The Big Business of Slave Trading

When in 1517 Bishop Bartolomeo de Las Casas advocated the encouragement of immigration to the New World by permitting Spaniards to import African slaves, the trading of humans in the New World formally began. Las Casas was so determined to relieve Indians of the onerous burden of slavery that he recommended the enslavement of Africans. (Later, he so deeply regretted having taken this position that he vigorously renounced it.) The ban against the use of Africans was removed, and Charles II issued licenses to several Flemish traders to take Africans to the Spanish colonies. Monopoly of the trade went to the highest bidders. Sometimes it was held by Dutch traders, at other times by Portuguese, French, or English. As West Indian plantations grew in size and importance, the slave trade became a huge, profitable undertaking employing thousands of persons and involving a capital outlay of millions of dollars. By 1540 the annual importation of African slaves into the West Indies was estimated at 10,000.

Although Portugal was the first European country to engage in the African slave trade, it did not become one of the principal countries to realize great profits. At a time when other countries were granting monopolies to powerful, government-supported trading companies, Portugal elected to leave her trade in the hands of merchants, who proved ineffective matches for their competitors from other countries. Not until 1692 did Portugal license the Portuguese Company of Cacheo. By that time several strong companies from other countries had so monopolized the slave trade that Portugal did not have an opportunity to garner more than the proverbial crumbs from the table. Spain had been excluded from Africa by the papal arbitration of 1493 and was forced to content herself with granting the privilege of carrying slaves to her colonies, the much sought after *asiento*, to various companies and individuals from other countries.

The trade in humans that developed into such a big business in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was largely in the hands of Dutch, French, and English companies. After Holland extricated itself from the control of Spain in the late sixteenth century, it launched a bold program of competing with other European countries for a share in the wealth of the New World. When they failed to secure Angola and Brazil, the Dutch contented themselves with relatively small territorial possessions and concentrated their energies on seizing control of the commercial routes to the New World. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was organized with a monopoly of both the African trade and trade with the Dutch colonies in the New World. The company immediately challenged the claim of Portugal to exclusive trading privileges on the African coast, and by the middle of the century it had gained a substantial foothold there. While England was preoccupied with civil wars at home, Holland was strengthening its position both in Africa and America. Dutch slavers could be seen in the ports of almost all the American colonies in the seventeenth century. They brought the first Africans to several French islands, including Martinique and Guadeloupe. On occasion they even took Africans to the Spanish islands, much against the will of Spain, their former subjector.

Holland's wars with France and England in the late seventeenth century left it considerably weakened and never again did it achieve the dominance in the slave trade that it had formerly held. Many independent Dutch traders sought wealth in Africa, a goal that the company tried to obviate by offering licenses to such people. Because of its aggressiveness in the eighteenth century, Holland encountered new difficulties with other countries. Dutch traders pushed into sections of Africa that were under French influence, while on the Guinea coast Holland's seizure of certain possessions from Portugal caused much concern in England. In the West Indies and in South America, Holland used its holdings as centers for the distribution of slaves throughout the New World. Although the end of the century brought a noticeable decline in Dutch influence both in Africa and the New World, this did not take place until after Dutch traders had reaped a bountiful harvest from the slave trade.

Long before Sir John Hawkins inaugurated the English slave trade, merchants of that country had become interested in trade between Africa and the New World. Before the end of the reign of Henry VIII, traders from Britain were developing relationships along the Guinea coast and along the Brazilian coast. By the middle of the seventeenth century, many individuals and organizations, including the powerful East India Company, showed an interest in the African slave trade. The increased needs of the flourishing English colonies in the New World and the chaotic political conditions at home stimulated concern about as well as investments in the slave trade. The relative stability of the Restoration ushered in a period of renewed activity, which was crowned with eminent success. In 1672 the king chartered the Royal African Company, the reorganized group that had held the monopoly for a decade. For almost half a century this company dominated the English slave trade and indeed became the most important single slave-trading group in the world. It jealously guarded the monopoly that the king had granted, and at the same time it attempted to drive the French and the Dutch out of West Africa. The growing number of independent traders in England bitterly fought the company's exclusive right to enjoy the African trade. Pressures at home resulted in the company's loss of its monopoly in 1698. Though it continued to trade in humans, its margin of profit declined. In 1731 it gave up the slave trade and centered its attention on ivory and gold dust.

Greater success attended England's efforts to control the west coast than the Royal African Company experienced in its efforts at national monopoly. Decisive defeats of the Dutch by the British and the French in the late seventeenth century had the effect of enhancing England's prestige in Africa. The blow sustained by France in the War of the Spanish Succession resulted in England's securing the *asiento*—the exclusive right to take slaves to the

Spanish colonies—for thirty years. With British colonies in the Caribbean and on the mainland paying handsome dividends with their bountiful productivity, England's commerce came to dominate the entire world. With a strengthened navy and almost unlimited resources in capital for investment, England could now undertake to satisfy not only the growing demand of its own colonies for slaves but the demands of other colonies in the New World as well.

During the Seven Years' War England transported more than 10,000 slaves to Cuba and approximately 40,000 to Guadeloupe. By 1788 two-thirds of all slaves brought by England to the New World were sold in foreign colonies. Naturally the planters in the English colonies objected to their competitors in the New World being provided with slaves by British traders. What the planters did not realize, perhaps, was that the slave trade had itself become an important factor in England's economic life. If England's colonies were the foundation of the English economic system, certainly in the eighteenth century the slave trade was an important cornerstone of that system.

Since England came to dominate the slave trade, the machinery for prosecuting the traffic was to a large extent the product of English ingenuity. England certainly had no monopoly on the development of slave-trading practices, but its extensive interests and its great success marked it as the country to be emulated. It is for this reason that these practices are almost invariably associated with England. The techniques of trading in slaves were developed after years of trial and failure. Trading posts, or factories, on the coast were the indispensable bases of operation. Once they had been established, and the more the better, trading could proceed. Ships laden with European goods either brought traders out or furnished those already there with goods to be traded. Cotton textiles of all descriptions, utensils of brass, pewter, and ivory, boxes of beads of many sizes and shapes, guns and gunpowder, spirits—whiskey, brandy, and rum—and a variety of foodstuffs were some of the more important items to be exchanged for slaves. The value of the cargo varied with the size of the ship and the time of trading. A typical cargo would seem to be that of the *King Solomon* which in 1720 had an inventory of £4,250 worth of goods when it left London for Cape Castle on the west coast. At each trading post were stationed a number of factors, slave traders who maintained friendly relations with Africans in order to procure slaves. The posts, often bulging with European goods, were well fortified and guarded by soldiers.

Upon arrival at a post in Africa the trader was ready to establish contacts both with the officials at the post and with local Africans who assisted in securing the desired slaves. The usual procedure was to go to the chief of the tribe, make arrangements with him, and secure "permission" to trade in his domain. The chief, after being properly persuaded with gifts, then appointed various assistants who were at the disposal of the trader. Foremost among these was the caboceer, who assumed the responsibility of gathering up those to be sold—at prices previously agreed upon between the trader and the chief. The trading proceeded apace once the captives were brought before the trader for inspection, the entire process having been promoted by the traders themselves, as Robert Rodney has suggested. It was necessary for the trader to consult with his physician and other advisers concerning purchases. Frequently, the prospective slaves had been so cleanly shaven and soaked in palm oil that it was most difficult to ascertain their age or physical condition. The prices, of course, varied greatly depending on the age and condition of the slave, the period of the trading, and the location of the post. Many transactions were mere barter, but there are accounts that reveal that in the middle of the eighteenth century £20 sterling was a typical price to pay for a healthy young man at Cape Castle or some other important post on the Guinea coast.

It must not be supposed that trading in slaves involved the simple procedure of sailing into a port, loading up with slaves, and sailing away. In addition to the various courtesy visits and negotiations that protocol required and that the traders were inclined to follow in order to keep the local leaders in good humor, it was often difficult to find enough "likely" slaves to fill a ship of considerable size. Frequently, traders had to remain at one place for two or three weeks before enough slaves were rounded up to make the negotiations worthwhile. It was not unusual for a ship to be compelled to call at four or five places in order to purchase as many as 500 slaves. Local inhabitants frequently had to scour the interior and use much coercion to secure enough slaves to meet the demands of the traders.

Another delay came in disposing of the cargo that had been brought from Europe and in provisioning the ship with supplies needed for the voyage to America. Experience taught the traders what to take, but at times they took goods not especially desired at the places where they were able to purchase their slaves. If they could not persuade the permanent post officials to take the goods, they would then have to take them all the way back to England. At the post and from Africans traders obtained supplies for the western voyage across the Atlantic. Indian corn, kidney beans, yams, fruits, coconuts, and plantains were the principal foodstuffs secured. In addition, sundry medicines were stocked so that the physician might administer to the slaves, who were almost certain to become ill en route. The last post at which the slaver could make such transactions was Gorée, on the coast of Senegal.

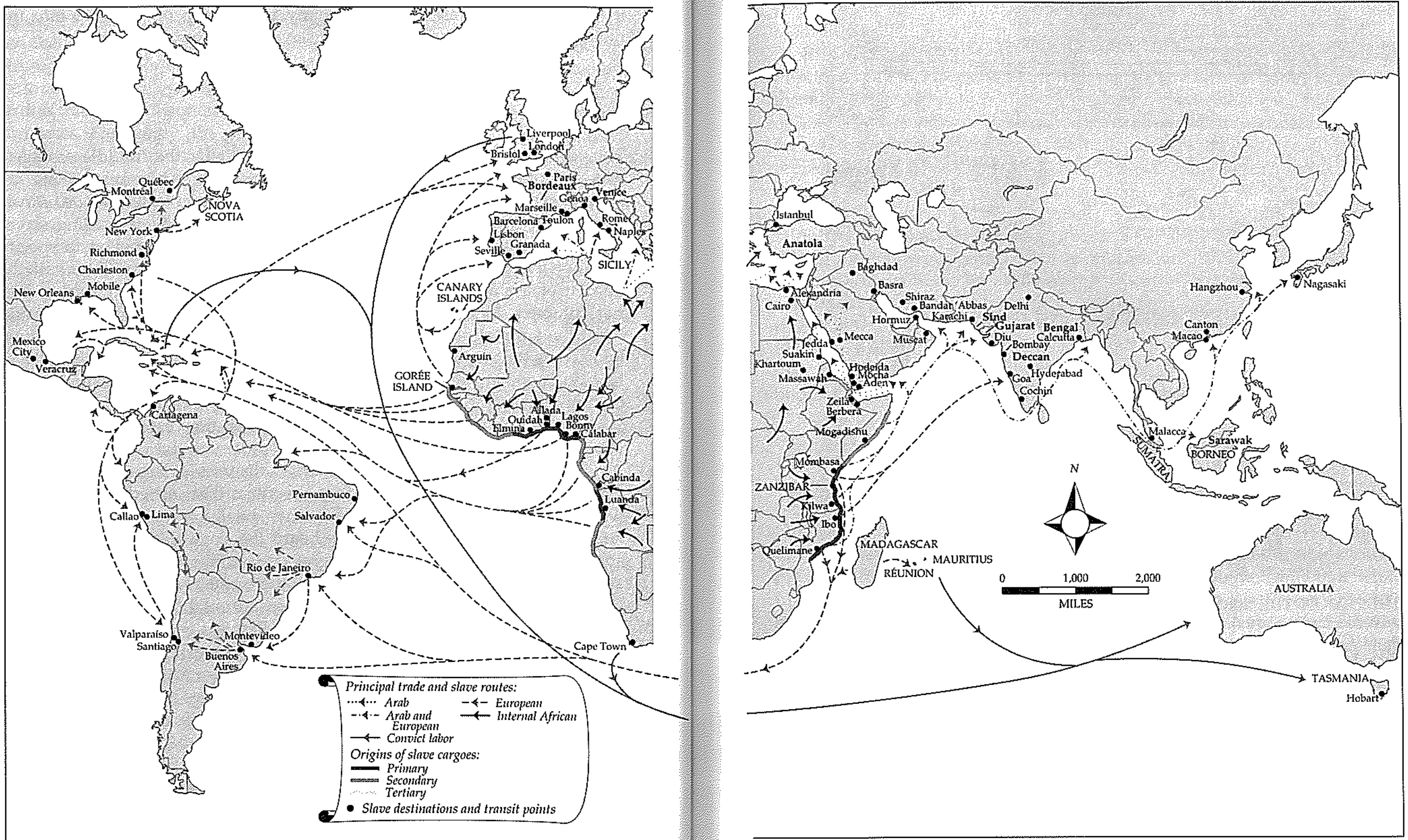
Africans offered stiff resistance to their capture, sale, and transportation to the unknown New World. Fierce wars broke out between tribes when members of one sought to capture members of another to sell them to traders. Slaves brought to the post for sale were always chained, for the caboceers and slave captains very early learned that without such safeguards the slaves would make their escape. One trader remarked that the "Negroes were so wilful and loth to leave their own country, that they have often leap'd out of the canoes, boat and ship, into the sea, and kept under water till they were drowned" to avoid being taken up by their captors. At the first opportunity, if indeed it ever presented itself, many would leap off the ship into the mouths of hungry sharks to avoid enslavement in the New World.

One-Way Passage

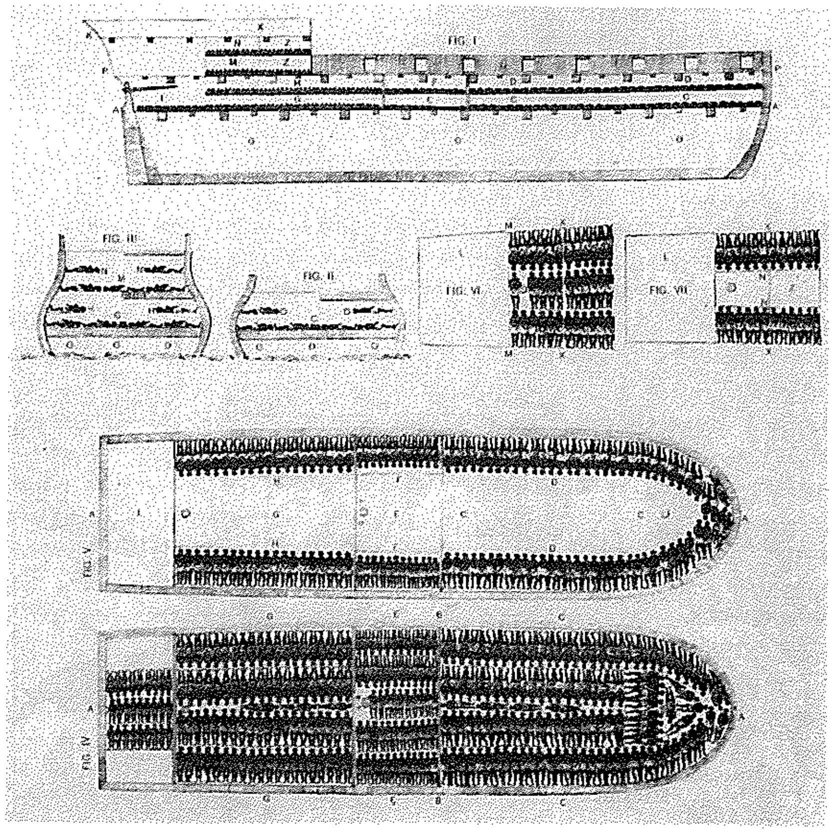
The voyage to the Americas, popularly referred to as the "middle passage," was a veritable nightmare. Overcrowding was most common. There are records of ships as small as 90 tons carrying a complement of 390 slaves in addition to crew and provisions. The practice of overcrowding slaves became so common that the British Parliament felt compelled to specify that not more than five slaves could be carried for every 3 tons of the burden of a ship of 200 tons. This regulation, like so many others, was not enforced. More slaves meant greater profits, and few traders could resist the temptation to wedge in a few more. There was hardly standing, lying, or sitting room. Chained together by twos, hands and feet, slaves had no room in which to move about and no freedom to exercise their bodies even in the slightest.

It was doubtless the crowded conditions on the vessels that so greatly increased the incidence of disease and epidemics during the voyage to America. Smallpox was one of the dread diseases of the period, and one experienced observer remarked that few ships that carried slaves escaped without it. Perhaps even more deadly than smallpox was flux, a frequently fatal malady from which whites on board the slave ships were apparently spared. Hunger strikes at times aggravated unfavorable health conditions and induced illnesses where previously there had been none. The filth and stench caused by close quarters and disease brought on more illness, and the mortality rate increased accordingly. Perhaps not more than half the slaves shipped from Africa ever became effective workers in the New World. Many of those that did not die of disease or commit suicide by jumping overboard were permanently disabled by the ravages of some dread disease or by maiming, which often resulted from struggling against the chains. Small wonder that one trader who arrived at Barbados with 372 of his original 700 slaves was moved to remark: "No gold-finders can endure so much noisome slavery as they do who carry Negroes; for those have some respite and satisfaction, but we endure twice the misery; and yet by the mortality our voyages are ruin'd and we pine and fret ourselves to death, to think that we should undergo so much misery, and take so much pains to so little purpose."

It may be reasonably doubted that the situation was as unfavorable as that trader pictured it. To be sure, there were difficulties of many kinds, not the least of which was the great mortality among the whites themselves. Even with the great expenses attached to the trade and the extensive loss sustained in the mortality of slaves in transit, the slave trade was still one of the most important sources of European wealth in the seventeenth and



This map shows the general direction of the principal sea routes of Arab, European, and American trade in African slaves up to 1873. The selected destinations include slave debarkation and settlement areas, ports visited by African crewmen, locations of slaves taken on home leave by slaveholders and military officers, and points in England and Canada where slaves were taken following the American War for Independence in 1783.



THE PLAN OF THE "BROOKES". A) lower deck; B) lower deck, breadth; C) men's room; D) platforms, men's room; E) boys' room; F) platforms, boys' room; G), women's room; H) platforms, women's rooms; I) gun room; K) quarter-deck; L) cabin; M) half-deck; N) platforms, half-deck; O) hold; P) upper deck. Fig. I) lengthwise cross section; II) breadthwise cross section of men's section; III) breadthwise cross section of women's section; IV) lower deck, with platforms; V) lower deck, without platforms; VI) half-deck, with platforms; VII) half-deck, without platforms. The "Brookes," a 320-ton vessel, was one of the eighteen slave-trading ships examined by a committee before making recommendations to the English Parliament for the regulation of such vessels in 1788. The abolitionists claimed that the "Brookes," built to accommodate 451 persons, carried as many as 609 slaves on one of her voyages. *(From a pamphlet by Thomas Clarkson, London, 1839. Carnegie Institution of Washington.)*

eighteenth centuries. In the late eighteenth century, it was possible for a ship captain to make a commission of £360 on the sale of 307 slaves and for the trader to earn £465 on the same sale. It was not unusual for a ship carrying 250 slaves to net as much as £7,000 on one voyage. Profits of 100 percent were not uncommon for Liverpool merchants. Perhaps those engaged in the trade did undergo much misery, but if they were seeking profits (and who among them had other motives?), it hardly seems accurate for one of them to add that they took "so much pains to so little purpose."

It is not possible to give an accurate figure of the number of slaves imported into the New World from Africa. In eleven years, from 1783 through 1793, Liverpool traders alone were responsible for the importation of 303,737, while in the following eleven years they were certainly responsible for as many more. While the closing years of the eighteenth century represented the peak in the slave trade, the preceding two centuries showed a steady increase leading to the apogee reached in the 1790s.

In 1861 Edward E. Dunbar made estimates of the number of slaves imported into the New World, and these figures were widely accepted during the following century. He estimated that 887,500 were imported in the sixteenth century, 2,750,000 in the seventeenth, 7,000,000 in the eighteenth, and 3,250,000 in the nineteenth. In 1936 R. R. Kuczynski estimated that 14,650,000 Africans had been imported into the New World. In 1969 Philip D. Curtin challenged these estimates. Basing his findings on exhaustive studies of records of slavers, records of slave importations, slave populations in the New World at various times, regional and ethnic origins of slaves imported into the New World, and other pertinent data, Curtin estimated that 241,400 slaves were imported in the sixteenth century, 1,341,100 in the seventeenth, 6,051,700 between 1701 and 1810, and 1,898,400 between 1810 and 1870. His estimate of the total number imported between 1451 and 1870 is 9,566,100. Curtin's figures were in turn challenged by J. E. Inikori, who insisted that the evidence "very strongly suggests a substantial upward revision of the estimates that Curtin made." Declining to give a total figure for the entire slave-trading period, Inikori pointed out that while Curtin's estimate for British exports between 1750 and 1807 was 1,616,100, his own research led him to conclude that the figure was at least 2,365,014. It is obvious that Inikori would place the total estimates much higher than the 9,566,100 estimated by Curtin.

In view of the great numbers that must have been killed while resisting capture, the additional numbers that died during the middle passage, and the millions that were successfully brought to the Americas, the aggregate approaches staggering proportions. The figures, whether Dunbar's, Kuczynski's, Curtin's, or Inikori's, are a testimonial to the fabulous profits realized in such a sordid business, to the ruthlessness with which the traders must have pursued it, and to the tremendous demands made by New World settlers for laborers. Perhaps poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, first president of the republic of Senegal, best summed it up when he declared that the slave trade "ravaged black Africa like a brush fire, wiping out images and values in one vast carnage."

It is more difficult to measure the effect of such an activity on African life than it is to estimate the number of persons removed. The expatriation of millions of Africans in less than four centuries constitutes one of the most far-reaching and drastic social revolutions in the annals of history. It is to be remembered that traders would have none but the best available natives. They demanded the healthiest, the largest, the youngest, the ablest, and the most culturally advanced. The vast majority of the slaving was carried on in the area of West Africa, where civilization had reached its highest point on the continent, with the possible exception of Egypt. The removal of the best of the African population deprived the continent of an invaluable resource. J. E. Inikori insists that the African population and its general well-being would have been much greater by the nineteenth century if the foreign slave trade had not existed. The encouragement that Europeans gave them to fight among themselves with European explosive weapons made it even more difficult for them to recover from the body blow that the slave trade had dealt them. Africa, which culturally was within some measurable distance of Europe at the beginning of the fifteenth century, received the worst possible influence from her Christian neighbors to the north. It was under these adverse circumstances that she entered a recession that in time would suffer the coup de grâce of the imperialistic enslavement thrust upon her in the nineteenth century.

Colonial Enterprise in the Caribbean

The slave trade became a tremendously important factor in European economic life primarily because of developments in the New World. The trade in men and women would have remained inconsequential had it been confined to the importation of a few servants into Europe. Its great growth came as the colonies in the New World increased and manifested a pressing need for labor to do the job of clearing the land and tilling the fields. It is, therefore, no mere accident that the seventeenth century, which witnessed the first important advances in the slave trade, also saw the growth of European interest in colonizing and developing the economic life of the New World. The Caribbean was the scene of the first serious effort to develop a lucrative agricultural economy in the New World. It was to the islands in this area that important complements of slaves were sent.

The rivalry among European countries for control of the islands in the seventeenth century presaged the more intense rivalry for hegemony on the mainland that was to develop during the following century. Spain, of course, had prior claim to the islands, thanks to the explorations of its sailors in the fifteenth century and the papal arrangement of 1493. The Spaniards took advantage of this position by channeling their energies and capital into the development of their insular possessions, the most important of which were Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, and Jamaica. Although they were to lose some of these and other islands in various conflicts, they nevertheless made the most of them by producing staple crops, especially tobacco and sugar, with slave labor. Early in the sixteenth century large consignments of slaves went to the Spanish islands. In 1518, for example, the king of Spain granted a

trader the right to ship 4,000 Africans to the Spanish islands. By 1540 the annual importation had reached approximately 10,000. It must be remembered, moreover, that there was already developing an illicit trade the size of which there was no way of determining.

The breaking of the Spanish monopoly in the Caribbean was closely connected with the slave trade. What the English first sought was an opportunity to share in the Caribbean trade which, during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, already gave promise of being decidedly profitable. When Spain rejected this bid, the English, led in both thought and action by John Hawkins, decided that the monopoly could be broken only by force. Hawkins planned to take slaves to the New World with the hope that the colonists' desire for them would be sufficient to overcome their respect for the royal ban on unlicensed trade. The pattern that he set in selling slaves and other African goods at Hispaniola in 1563 was eagerly followed by other and less discreet English imitators, who were summarily arrested and punished by Spanish officials on the island. Although for the moment Spain had checked the encroachment of Hawkins and others, it was only a matter of time before Spain would have to yield valuable ground in regard both to the commercial and the territorial monopoly it had enjoyed.

In the seventeenth century Spain lost all claim to exclusive control over the islands in the Caribbean. Denmark, Holland, France, and England acquired territory in the area. Dutch buccaneers were entrenched in Curaçao, St. Eustatius, and Tobago by 1640, and the Dutch West India Company, supported enthusiastically by its government, was promoting the slave trade. At about the same time, the French Company of the Islands of America settled Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Marie Galante. In the 1650s St. Lucia and Grenada were acquired by France. The English secured control of St. Christopher in 1623, Barbados in 1625, and Nevis, Antigua, and Montserrat in the 1630s. In 1655 they won one of the great prizes of the Caribbean by driving the Spaniards out of Jamaica. In 1671 the Danes acquired St. Thomas. The Spanish monopoly had indeed been broken, and the West Indies had become not only a pawn in European diplomacy but an important source of revenue for Europeans. African slavery proved to be invaluable in building revenue-producing institutions.

The Plantation System

Africans were first used on the tobacco plantations of the Caribbean islands. By 1639, however, European markets had become so glutted with the weed that the price decreased sharply and West Indian planters sustained a great loss. Some of them turned to cotton and indigo, neither of which proved to be as profitable as they had hoped. Some heeded the suggestions of Dutch merchant traders who suggested that they try sugar. It appeared to be a good opportunity, and with capital borrowed from Dutch and English merchants, West Indian planters began to cultivate sugarcane. The results surpassed their greatest expectations, and they immediately made plans for extension of the cultivation. The problem of labor became acute, and the planters turned more and more to the use of slaves. Thus, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the importation of Africans into the Caribbean islands began in earnest.

In 1640 there were only a few hundred Africans in Barbados. By 1645, after the new sugar plantations had demonstrated their profitableness, there were 6,000, and by the middle of the century the African population had increased to 20,000. Between 4,000 and 5,000 Africans of good quality were delivered to the island in the 1660s, and they found a ready market among the sugar planters. By the end of the century Barbados had a black population of upward of 80,000. A similar growth took place in many of the other Caribbean islands in the seventeenth century. The momentum of importation was so great by the end of the century that in the next 100 years, when the demand for slaves in the islands was declining, importation continued, and in most places it even increased. By 1763, 60,000 African slaves had been imported into Cuba. In the next three decades they came in at a much more rapid rate. Through a system of granting special licenses to importers, Spain was able to bring into Cuba as many as 17,000 Africans in a single year in the 1770s. Between 1763 and 1790, about 41,000 were brought in, while between 1791 and 1825 no less than 320,000 were delivered to Havana alone. Jamaica, Nevis, Montserrat, St. Christopher, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia experienced proportionately similar increases.

The tendency to overpopulate the islands of the Caribbean arose from several important factors. Of course, many slaves who were brought to the islands were to be reexported. Furthermore, there seemed to be no substantial increase in the black population of the islands as a result of births until the emancipation in the 1830s. The death rate was so extraordinarily high that it raises the question of the treatment of slaves. In one year, for example, 2,656 Africans were born in St. Vincent, but in the same year there were 4,205 deaths. On one plantation in Jamaica more than half of the children died in infancy, while miscarriages ran high. Some authorities have attributed the high mortality rate to improper food and the ravages of disease. Doubtless these conditions were present, but the view of many masters that slaves were cheaper to purchase than to breed and the consequent imposition of undue labor on men and women of all conditions and ages apparently caused more deaths than anything else.

There were few evidences of humanitarianism on the plantations of the West Indies. Slavery was essentially an economic institution. Slaves were being extensively used for the sole purpose of producing sugar and other staple crops. Through the use of slaves to produce the rich crops the islands became the favorites of their parent countries. As one writer put it, the islands were "of immense importance to the grandeur and prosperity of England." If the importation of more slaves meant greater prosperity—and it seemed so to the island planters—they were imported with little regard for anything other than economic considerations.

It was absentee landlordism that constituted one of the most important factors in the development of practices that were manifestly destructive of health and life among slaves. Some English landlords pleaded that the climate of the sugar colonies was "so inconvenient for an English constitution that no man will chuse to live there, much less will any man chuse to settle there, without the hopes of at least supporting his family in a more handsome manner, or saving more money than he can do by any business he can expect in England, or in our plantations upon the continent of America." The islands were, therefore, regarded not as a place of residence but merely as a source of wealth. If a planter came out to the Caribbean, he regarded it as a temporary sojourn. Soon he would return to his home country, and with the wealth he had amassed buy an estate and live like a gentleman. Why, then, should he interest himself in schools, churches, and laws that would improve conditions of life for everyone?

Since black slaves were constantly being brought in from Africa, overseers found it necessary to develop a practice of "breaking in" the newcomers. In some areas they were distributed among the seasoned, or veteran, slaves whose duty it was to teach the newly arrived slaves the ways of life in the New World. In other places the newcomers were kept apart and supervised by a special staff of guardians and inspectors who were experienced in breaking in those who might offer resistance to adjusting to their new environment. The mortality rate among newly arrived slaves was exceptionally high, with estimates of deaths running to as much as 30 percent in a seasoning period of three or four years. Old and new diseases, change of climate and food, exposure incurred in running away, suicide, and excessive flogging were among the main causes of the high mortality rate.

In the West Indies slaves were sent to the farms at daybreak, and they labored all day except for a thirty-minute period for breakfast and a two-hour period in the hottest portion of the day, which was frequently the time set aside for doing lighter chores. At harvest time the workday was much longer, sometimes eighteen hours. The driver or overseer did not distinguish between men and women in work requirements or in applying the lash for dereliction of duty. Investigations made by the British Parliament in 1790–1791 brought out the fact that pregnant women were forced to work up to the time of childbirth and that a month was the maximum amount of time allowed for recovery from childbearing. Pregnant women were lashed severely when they were unable to keep pace with the other workers. Women who paused in the fields to care for their babies, whom they carried on their backs, were lashed with cart whips for idling away their time.

Food was on the whole insufficient for slaves. Planters did not often encourage any type of diversified agriculture which would have provided food for the workers. Where this was done at all, slaves were given small plots of land, sometimes far from their houses, that they could cultivate in spare moments. In Barbados, where planters had the reputation of providing for their slaves better than the planters of other islands, slaves were generally ill-fed. On one plantation each adult slave was given a pint of grain and half of a herring (not infrequently rotten) for twenty-four hours. In the famous investigation of 1790–1791 no plantation was found where a slave received more than nine pints of corn and one pound of salt meat per week. Fish of the least desirable grades were imported from the New England colonies, and where this was done the planter acquired a reputation for great benevolence.

On many islands the African population outnumbered the white population. For example, as early as 1673 there were 10,000 blacks in Jamaica and only 8,000 whites. In 1724 there were 32,000 blacks and 14,000 whites. At the end of the century the black population of St. Christopher was over 20,000, "well nigh twenty times that of the white population." It was the preponderance of blacks over whites that promoted the enactment of a slave code of excessive severity. The influence of planters in England made possible the passage, in 1667, of an "Act to regulate the Negroes on the British Plantations." It referred to the Africans in the Caribbean as "of wild, barbarous, and savage nature to be controlled only with strict severity." Slaves were not to leave the plantation without a pass, and they were not allowed to carry any weapons. If a slave struck a Christian, he was to be severely whipped, and for the second offense he was to be branded on the face with a hot iron. If an owner accidentally whipped a slave to death, he or she was not subject to fine or imprisonment. Other European countries had similar laws, but there seemed to have been considerable variation in enforcement. While the well-known French *Code Noir* was relatively humane, it became an agency of great brutality in the hands of some French colonials. When Ogé and his associates were found guilty of conspiring to revolt in the last decade of the eighteenth century, all were cruelly executed. "Their arms, thighs, legs, and backbones were broken with clubs on a scaffold. They were fastened round a wheel in such a manner that their face was turned upward to receive the full glare of the sun." The judge ordered that "Here they are to remain for so long as it shall please God to preserve them alive," after which their heads were to be cut off and exposed on tall poles.

One important ingredient in the seasoning process was the overseer's lash. A typical one was made of plaited cowhide. In the hands of a stern overseer it could draw blood through the breeches of a slave. At times the floggings were so severe as to inflict wounds so large that a finger could be inserted in them. Another favorite type of punishment was to suspend the slave from a tree by ropes and tie iron weights around his or her neck and waist. If these punishments would seem to shorten life and to reduce efficiency, it must be remembered that Africans were being brought in at an increasing rate up until the opening of the nineteenth century and that there was consequently no great inclination to preserve life.

If cruel treatment was designed to prevent uprisings and running away, it was eminently unsuccessful. On almost every island there is a record of some serious revolt against the plantation system, and everywhere there is evidence of constant running away. When the British took Jamaica in the middle of the seventeenth century, most of the slaves promptly escaped to the mountains, where they were frequently joined by other fugitives. These runaways, called Maroons, continuously harassed planters by stealing, trading with slaves, and enticing them to run away. By 1730 these ex-slaves, under Cudgo, their powerful leader, had terrorized whites to such an extent that England was compelled to send out two additional regiments to protect the planters.

Haiti also had its Maroons as early as 1620, and the outlawed colony grew to such proportions that the colonial government recognized it in 1784. It is conceded that they were largely responsible for the Haitian uprisings of 1679, 1691, and 1704. In the middle of the eighteenth century the recalcitrant Negroes of Haiti found a peerless leader in Macandal, a native-born African, who announced that he was the Black Messiah sent to drive the whites from the island. In 1758 he carefully laid his plans for a coup d'état. The water of Le Cap was to be poisoned, and when the whites were in convulsions the Negroes, under the leadership of Macandal and his Maroons, were to seize control. By accident, the plot was discovered, and the fear-stricken planters hunted down Macandal and executed him. At the time of his execution he warned his enemies and comforted his friends by telling them that one day he would return, more terrible than before. Many blacks, and perhaps some whites, were later to believe that Toussaint L'Ouverture was the reincarnation of Macandal.

Even on the small Danish islands there are records of slave resistance. The lack of sufficient food drove many slaves to steal and to refuse to work. In 1726 officials executed seventeen of the leading offenders, but this did not quiet the slaves. The situation worsened, and in 1733 the governor of St. Thomas issued a drastic decree providing for severe punishment of slave offenders by burning, whipping, and hanging. Two months later the Danish islands experienced their worst uprising, which occurred on St. John. Blacks carrying wood entered one of the forts of the Danish West India Company and murdered the guard by stabbing him. Another group of slaves attacked six soldiers and killed five of them. Having captured the garrison, they raised the flag and fired three shots from the cannon, the signal for a general uprising on all the plantations on the island. With flintlocks, pistols, and cane knives the Africans went about the bloody business of murdering all the whites they could find. Only after several days of terror was the uprising brought under control by the captain of the militia.

It was the same everywhere—conspiracies, uprisings, revolts. The seeds of cruelty reaped a bountiful harvest of murder and bloodshed. As the years passed and as slaves learned their duties, they performed them, albeit reluctantly. Time also proved that they could adjust to the climate and food of the New World. Although their terms of service on the islands were by no means satisfactory, they were regarded as seasoned within three or four years and were viewed by mainland planters as much more desirable than the "raw Negroes" fresh from the "wilds" of Africa.

Slaves were being constantly exported from the islands, especially from the British islands. In an effort to capture the slave trade with foreign islands, British traders first brought slaves to some British island and then quietly reexported them to Cuba, Puerto Rico, or some other foreign island. While it is not possible to estimate the number of Africans transported to Cuba from the British islands, it is quite clear that this was Cuba's most important source of slaves. Jamaica alone sent more than 10,000 there in 1756. Of the 90,331 Africans imported into the British West Indies between 1784 and 1787, some 19,964 were reexported; but it is not possible to determine whether they went to French, Spanish, or Portuguese markets, to other British islands, or to the mainland.

As the prosperity of the West Indies declined in the early eighteenth century and as the attention of Europe became focused on the continent of North America, more slaves were doubtless exported from the islands to the mainland. The demand for slaves in the mainland colonies was steadily increasing, and a decided preference for slaves from the islands was manifested. In 1764 several shipments of slaves were made from the West Indies to South Carolina. They came from St. Christopher, Antigua, Barbados, and even Havana. Although the islands could not satisfy the growing demand for slaves on the mainland, they sent some of their surplus yearly, as the records amply testify. Indeed, reexportation itself became a lucrative business in which many persons were engaged. On the islands of St. Christopher, Barbados, and Jamaica some firms carried on a regular business of reexporting slaves to other islands and to the mainland. In the colonies many firms did business directly with traders on the islands.

The cost of producing sugar increased as soil exhaustion manifested itself after a century of intensive cultivation. The price of slaves, moreover, was going up as the demand for them increased on the mainland. White society was so completely without resourceful and imaginative leadership that it was not able to discover areas of economic activity that would compensate for the losses it was sustaining in older activities. Desperate efforts were made both in Europe and in the island colonies to encourage whites to migrate to the Caribbean. Some islands required planters to import proportionate numbers of whites for all the slaves they brought, but many planters found it easier to pay the fines. With a surplus of slaves on their hands, the residents of the West Indies were willing to sell many of them to the mainland colonies.

The increasing exportation of slaves from the West Indies is a clear manifestation of social and economic debility. After several centuries of European occupation, religious institutions were still weak, and vice and immorality of all kinds flourished. Education was at an especially low ebb, and ignorance prevailed even among whites. The ineffectiveness of the law

showed itself in its inability to prevent running away, insurrections, and widespread miscegenation. In sending many of their slaves to the mainland, the West Indies served notice to the world that they had yielded the long-held economic primacy in the New World to the mainland.

Slavery in Mainland Latin America

In 1501 the government in Madrid authorized the introduction of Africans to make up for the deficiency in Indian labor which the Spaniards had been using in the New World, much more than the English ever used. The condition that only such Africans should be taken as had been born under the power of Christian masters was shortly overlooked as the demand for workers increased. They were being brought into Cuba in such large numbers by 1506 that the Spanish government, for fear of a slave uprising, was moved to prohibit their future importation. For a decade the importation of Africans slowed to a trickle, and the extensive use of Indians was resumed. In 1516 Charles II issued licenses to several Flemish traders to take Africans to the Spanish colonies. In the following year the ban against the use of Africans was removed, with the stipulation that one-third of those imported should be women. By the time that Cortés launched his conquest of Mexico, Africans were in all the Spanish island colonies and were being rapidly introduced into the mainland.

In the early years of the Spanish colonies the slave trade was viewed as un-Christian and illegal. To overcome this dual disfavor, it was necessary for traders to secure special permission—the *asiento*—to bring slaves into the Spanish colonies. This made it relatively easy for the crown to subject the traffic in slaves to rigid control. Since the contracts, or permits, were monopolistic, the holders were required to pay a tax to the crown on each slave brought in. The crown reserved the right to revoke the *asiento* if the traders did not make accurate reports on the numbers of slaves imported or if they were either unhealthy or in some other way undesirable as workers. Whether the *asiento* was held by private individuals or companies, by Spaniards, or by foreigners, the crown could use its granting powers as an effective diplomatic and economic weapon to enhance its influence in both hemispheres.

It would be erroneous to assume that slave traders in Spanish America confined their activities to the insular possessions. Almost from the beginning they transported slaves to Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Peru, and Argentina, and from these points the slaves were dispersed in all directions. Only the lines of supply directly from Africa or from the Caribbean entrepôts were officially recognized, but smugglers and interlopers were not averse to bringing Africans from English, French, or Dutch colonies or from other points when it was profitable to do so. By these various routes of commerce more than 60,000 Africans entered Mexico during the first century of conquest. In the following century the number was even greater. While the islands and the adjacent continent possessed a limited capacity to absorb slaves, the Mexican market was a veritable paradise for traders. The Jesuit Father Andrés de Rivas estimated that 3,000 or 4,000 entered the country each year. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, the Mexican historian, asserts that a conservative estimate for the seventeenth century would place the figure at 120,000 slaves. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries importation declined sharply, with no more than 20,000 slaves entering the Viceroyalty of New Spain during that period. When Baron Alexander von Humboldt visited the country in 1793, he said that there were only 10,000 slaves. Certainly 200,000 had entered the country by that time, but the majority had become mixed with the whites and Indians so extensively that perhaps they were no longer recognizable as a distinct element in the population.

During the colonial period Central America was largely a part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, and no separate figures are available for the importation of slaves into that region. Africans in Central America perhaps were a small but important segment of the population. They were imported into Guatemala as early as 1524, when the Spaniards occupied the land. While the number was never as large as 10,000, they were a considerable source of trouble to the Spanish authorities. Runaways would band together in the woods of Sierra de las Minas and with their bows and arrows harass the countryside for miles around. The entire military force of Guatemala City found it impossible to subdue them. Some slaves became free, developing into substantial citizens. One such freedman became an extensive landowner and herdsman. Although he made a great profit from dairy products that he sold in Guatemala City, the authorities felt that perhaps some hidden treasure was the real source of his wealth. He periodically denied this, and until his death he stood as an example of what an African was able to accomplish in Central America.

Perhaps the largest concentration of blacks in continental Spanish America was to be found in the Viceroyalty of New Granada, comprising the modern states of Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. The ports along the Caribbean early became entrepôts for Negro slaves and points from which they were distributed to the interior. Panama, Caracas, and Cartagena were among the largest slave markets in the New World. By the time that accurate census figures for the area became available, Negroes were present in considerable numbers. In the Audiencia of Santa Fé—present Panama and Colombia—there were in 1810 approximately 210,000 Negroes and mulattoes, slave and free, in a total population of 1.4 million. In the Captaincy General of Caracas—present Venezuela—Negroes and mulattoes numbered 493,000 in 1810, while the total population was 900,000. About the same time, the Presidency of Quito—present Ecuador—had 50,000 Negroes and mulattoes in a total population of 600,000.

One of the most striking features of the dispersion of Negroes in Spanish America was the presence of large numbers on the Pacific coast in the colonial

period. As Fernando Romero pointed out, "the slave trade in the Spanish South American colonies followed well-established lines from north to south and from south to north, the two currents converging on Peru." The Viceroyalty of Peru—roughly present Chile and Peru—was, thus, an area of concentration of Africans. Lima not only received a great share for its own exploitation but also served as a market from which Andean planters and herders could purchase black workers. Some were sent into this remote viceroyalty from Panama and Cartagena, while others were sent directly from Africa around Cape Horn. In 1622 the viceroy reported the presence of 30,000 Negroes in his domain, with 22,000 at Lima. In the middle of the following century one observer declared that there were many blacks, but that it was impossible to ascertain the exact numbers as the owners feared that the government would use the figures as the basis for a new tax.

When the first trustworthy census was taken in 1791, the population of Peru was approximately 1.25 million. Of that number, 40,000 were black and 135,000 were white. The remainder were Indians, *mestizos*—people of Indian and white ancestry—mulattoes, and various combinations of races. Blacks constituted 25 percent of the population of Lima. At about the same time the population of Chile was approximately 500,000, of which 30,000 were Negroes and mulattoes. These figures do not tell the entire story of the African population in the Viceroyalty of Peru. Accurate statistics were always difficult to secure because owners, fearing additional taxation, hid their slaves when census takers came around. The rapid absorption of Africans into the total population, moreover, made it difficult to measure their impact upon the area into which they were sent.

The absence of a considerable population of blacks in modern Uruguay and Argentina does not mean that Spain neglected to furnish these colonies with African slaves. Instead, it is suggestive of the remarkable biological and cultural fusion that occurred. Montevideo and Buenos Aires were major ports of entry for slave traders during colonial days. While there are no figures available for the total African population of the Viceroyalty of La Plata, there can be no doubt that there was a large population of blacks, especially in the area of the estuary of the Rio de la Plata. A contemporary estimated that in 1805 about 2,500 slaves were being imported annually. In 1803 the black population of Montevideo was 1,040 out of a total of 4,726. There is every indication that Buenos Aires also had a substantial black population. As late as 1827 there were seven African societies in the Argentine capital. The disappearance of Africans in the southern part of South America is an eloquent testimony of the complete absorption of a people by the tremendous migration of Europeans that occurred in the last century.

It was only natural that the Portuguese, the first to sense the importance of African slave labor, would undertake to provide their New World empire with Africans. Although they made extensive use of Indian labor throughout the sixteenth century, they introduced Africans into Brazil as early as 1538, when the first shipment from the Guinea coast reached Bahia. It was the introduction of sugar into the colony about 1540 that stimulated the importation of Africans, and after that time the slave trade continued unabated. During the period of Spanish control, 1580–1640, the slave trade to Brazil greatly accelerated. In 1585 there were 14,000 slaves in the colony out of a population of 57,000. Toward the end of the century the Spaniards brought in large numbers of slaves from Guinea, São Thomé, Mozambique, and other parts of Africa. Though there was a tendency for them to be concentrated in Pernambuco, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro, they fanned out in various directions as sugar and coffee plantations were developed in the fertile interior valleys.

There were five centers of distribution from which slaves were sent into the various parts of Brazil. From Bahia and Sergipe they were taken to plantations and to domestic service on the coast; from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo they were taken to cane fields and coffee plantations or were kept to work in the capital; from Minas Gerais most slaves were sent to the gold mines, such as those of Goyaz; slaves from the distribution center at Pernambuco supplied the sugar-producing provinces of the northeast, and slaves from Maranhão and Pará were sent to the cotton plantations of the north. In the seventeenth century it was estimated that more than 44,000 Africans were imported annually, while the following century witnessed an annual importation of no less than 55,000 blacks. Estimates of the number of Africans imported into Brazil vary from 5 million to 18 million. Whatever the total figures were, it is clear that between 1538 and 1828 Africans were imported in such large numbers that persons of African descent still constitute a considerable portion of the population.

In 1798 the first reliable estimate of the population listed 406,000 free blacks and 1,582,000 slaves in a total population of 3,250,000. By 1818 the total population had risen to 3,817,000, in which there were 1,930,000 slaves and 585,000 freedmen. Thus, it can be seen that in that twenty-year period Africans were largely responsible for the increase in the total population. In 1830 they constituted 28.6 percent of the population. In 1847, in a total population of 7,360,000, including 800,000 civilized Indians, there were 3,120,000 African slaves, 1,100,000 free persons of color, and 180,000 free native Africans. In 1888, the year of the emancipation of Brazil's slaves, there were 723,419 slaves.

There were three distinct groups of slaves in colonial Brazil. Urban slaves worked as servants in the town homes of planters, in shops, at the docks, and in numerous other capacities. On the whole, their lot was not difficult. Some were specially skilled in arts and crafts and performed invaluable services in helping to improve living conditions in urban areas. Others were kept in homes to render personal service. If there was insufficient work, owners sent their slaves out to find work. These freelancers, *negros de ganho*, often stood on street corners ready to assist shoppers with their packages or went from house to house offering their services to people who did not have servants. Many were able to earn fairly good wages because of their special

skills and their ability to read and write. With the opportunity to hire out their own services some slaves not only made money for their masters but also eventually earned enough to purchase their own freedom.

With the discovery of gold in the seventeenth century, large numbers of slaves were employed in the mines. The simultaneous decline in the sugar economy caused many planters either to sell or hire out their slaves to prospectors and mine owners. Black Brazilians began migrating into the interior near Goyaz, Corumba, and the plateau of Matto Grosso. Some were not employed in the mines but demonstrated their aptitudes and abilities in other ways, as iron workers, shoemakers, and even architects and sculptors.

The vast majority of blacks—perhaps five-sixths—were always employed on the great sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao plantations. These farm workers fared the worst in Brazil. They worked from sunrise to sunset and were supervised for the most part by stewards who, with whips in their hands, threatened, intimidated, and tortured them into performing their work. As in the Spanish colonies, there were laws that sought to protect slaves from cruel masters and overseers, but because such statutes were extremely difficult to enforce, they did not provide much help. The invention of instruments of torture must have taxed the ingenuity of those in command. There was the *tronco*, constructed of wood or iron, by which the slave's ankles were fastened in one place for several days; the *libambo* did the same thing to the arms. *Novenas* and *trezenas* were devices by which a slave was tied, face down, and beaten for nine or thirteen consecutive nights.

There were some mitigating features of Brazil's institution of slavery. Since there was no law against teaching slaves to read and write, many of them became proficient in the use of language. The law required that slaves be baptized within at least one year after their arrival in the country. After this rite was performed, they were expected to attend mass and confession regularly. In addition, the manumission of slaves was actually encouraged in Brazil. Faithful nurses were often set free. There was a general custom that after a slave mother had given birth to ten children she was to be set free. The clergy urged pious communicants to manumit their slaves at death if not sooner. There are perhaps no records of an owner's refusal to emancipate a slave who was able to purchase his or her freedom. Finally, there is the general view that in the colonial period Brazilians felt little, if any, race prejudice. Blacks were given many opportunities for advancement, and free blacks theoretically enjoyed the same rights and privileges before the law that whites did.

While slaves in Brazil and elsewhere were a source of profit, they were also a source of constant trouble. Living in small, crowded huts and subsisting on coarse fare, they frequently became restive and sought to break the chains of slavery. In 1550 the slaves of Santa Marta, Colombia, committed great atrocities and burned the city. Five years later an African calling himself king led a violent insurrection that was subdued only by strenuous exertions of the authorities. One of the most desperate bids for freedom in the New

World occurred in Brazil in the seventeenth century. It was the establishment of the Republic of Palmares, an African state in Alagoas in northeastern Brazil, between 1630 and 1697. Fleeing the towns and plantations between Bahia and Pernambuco, runaway slaves penetrated the heavy forests and settled rustic communities in the Rio Mundahu valley. Despite sieges laid by the Portuguese and by the Dutch, who were attempting to occupy that portion of Brazil in 1644, these Maroons held out until 1697, when the superior forces of the Portuguese soldiers entered the walled city of Palmares. Refusing to surrender, the leader and his principal assistants hurled themselves to certain death from the rocky promontory overlooking the city. Although the other insurrections and Maroon communities established in Spanish and Portuguese America perhaps never equaled Palmares, many of them were greater than any that slaves undertook in British America.

Several factors distinguished slavery in Latin America from that institution in British America. One such factor was the relatively small number of Spaniards and Portuguese in their colonies as compared to the considerable numbers of Britons in the English colonies. It was not at all unusual for slaves to outnumber by a large margin their Spanish and Portuguese owners and officials who frequently had little or no family with them and who were, all too often, infrequent visitors to their New World domains. Such a disproportionate number of blacks facilitated the many more successful insurrections and Maroon communities that arose in Latin American than arose in British America. Perhaps it also had something to do with the strict slave codes which were introduced into Latin America earlier than in British America.

Another factor was the significant role that the Catholic church played in Latin America. Priests often accompanied explorers and were usually present when settlers came. It was they who insisted that slaves be instructed in the Roman Catholic religion and baptized in the church. Owners were not permitted to work their slaves on Sundays and on the approximately thirty feast days during the year. Catholic slaves were married in the church, and the banns were published regularly. There was no law against their learning to read the catechism, and thus the whole world of reading was opened to them. Meanwhile, in the British colonies, where slaves could not enter into any kind of binding agreement, permission of the owner was the only prerequisite for marriage. Although many slaveholders in the British colonies encouraged slaves to be religious and to attend church regularly, the discipline of the Anglican church encouraged but did not require owners to tend the spiritual needs of their slaves. Far from encouraging them to learn to read and write, British colonies generally discouraged such activities, and some of them forbade them altogether. If the church in Latin America had some salutary influence on the treatment of slaves, it did not achieve complete success in eliminating cruelty altogether, as David B. Davis and others have reminded us.

A final factor was that blacks enjoyed a higher level of esteem in the Latin

colonies than in the British colonies, which perhaps helps to explain why many more Spaniards and Portuguese than Britons intermarried with blacks. It should be remembered that there were relatively few Spanish and Portuguese women in the New World. Choices were therefore limited. Even so, any stigma attached to intermarrying with blacks was virtually absent, and they did so in the church. Meanwhile, if any British Americans had intimate relationships with blacks, they were generally clandestine and without benefit of clergy.

Still, it does not necessarily follow that slaves fared better in Latin America than in British America. Examples abound of inhuman cruelty in all parts of the New World, and it is well to recall that during the 1830s, long after the United States outlawed the slave trade, Brazil imported 400,000 slaves from Africa. Although converted and baptized as Christians in Latin America, slaves were appraised and sold just like any other merchandise. The point to remember is that it is virtually impossible to speak of slavery other than in terms of its inhumanity, and that few institutions, including the churches, did anything to mitigate its fundamental cruelties and the insensitivity of one person who had complete dominion over another.