

South Carolina is one of the few states where there is a numerical preponderance of slaves. One night, at Charleston, I went to see the guard-house, where there is a strong guard kept constantly in arms, and on the alert. Every citizen is obliged to serve in person, or find a substitute; and the maintenance of such a force, the strict laws against importing books relating to emancipation, and the prohibition to bring back slaves who have been taken by their masters into free states, show that the fears of the owner, whether well-founded or not, are real.

During our stay at Charleston, we were present at a negro wedding, where the bride and bridegroom, and nearly all the company, were of unmixed African race. They were very merry. The bride and bridesmaids all dressed in white. The marriage service performed by an Episcopal clergyman. Not long afterwards, when staying at a farm-house in North Carolina, I happened to ask a planter if one of his negroes with whom we had been conversing was married. He told me, Yes, he had a wife on that estate, as well as another, her sister, on a different property which belonged to him; but that there was no legal validity in the marriage ceremony. I remarked, that he must be mistaken, as an Episcopal minister at Charleston would not have lent himself to the performance of a sacred rite, if it were nugatory in practice, and in the eye of the law. He replied, that he himself was a lawyer by profession, and that no legal validity ever had been, or ought to be, given to the marriage tie, so long as the right of sale could separate parent and child, husband and wife. Such separations, he said, could not always be prevented, when slaves multiplied fast, though they were avoided