CANNIBALS ALL! By George Fitzhugh, 1857

(an excerpt)

We are all, North and South, engaged in the White Slave Trade, and he who succeeds best is esteemed most respectable. It is far more cruel than the Black Slave Trade, because it exacts more of its slaves, and neither protects nor governs them. We boast that it exacts more when we say, “that the profits made from employing free labor are greater than those from slave labor.” The profits, made from free labor, are the amount of the products of such labor, which the employer, by means of the command which capital or skill gives him, takes away, exacts, or “expatiates” from the fee laborer. The profits of slave labor are that portion of the products of such labor which the power of the master enables him to appropriate. These profits are less, because the master allows the slave to retain a larger share of the results of his own labor than do the employers of free labor…

When the day’s labor is ended, he is free, but is overburdened with the cares of family and household, which makes his freedom an empty and delusive mockery…The Negro slave is free, too, when the labors of the day are over, and free in mind as well as body; for the master provides food, raiment, house, fuel and everything else necessary to the physical well-being of himself and his family.

The Negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessaries of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism of their husband by their masters. The Negro men and stout boys work, on the average, in good weather, not more than nine hours a day. The balance of their time is spent in perfect abandon. The free laborer must work or starve. He is more a slave than the Negro because he works longer and harder for less allowance than the slave, and has no holiday, because the cares of his life with him begin when its labors end. He has no liberty, and not a single right