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[WITH A SUPPLEMENT, FIVEPENCE

A BRITISH RAILWAY FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC.

"I HOPE," said her Majesty, on proroguing Parliament in 1858, "that its new colony in the Pacific (British Columbia) may be but one step in the career of steady progress by which my dominions in North America may be ultimately peopled in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Pacific by a loyal and industrious population." The aspiration so strikingly expressed found a fervent echo in the national heart, and it continues to engage the earnest attention of England; for it speaks of a great outspread of solid prosperity and of rational liberty, of the diffusion of our civilisation, and of the extension of our moral empire.

Since the Royal Speech Governments have done, something and events have done more, to ripen public opinion into action. The Governments at home and in Canada have organised and explored. The more perfect discoveries of our new gold-fields on the Pacific, the Indian mutiny, the completion of great works in Canada, the treaties with Japan and with China, the visit of the Prince of Wales to the American continent, and, at the moment, the sad dissensions in the United States, combine to interest us in the question, and to make us ask, "How is this hope to be realised, not a century hence, but in our time?"

Our augmenting interests in the East demand, for reasons both of empire and of trade, access to Asia less dangerous than by Cape Horn, less circuitous even than by Panama, less dependent than by Suez and the Red Sea. Our emigration, imperilled by the dissensions of the United States, must fall back upon

colonisation. And, commercially, the countries of the East must supply the raw materials and provide the markets which probable contests between the free man and the slave may diminish, or may close elsewhere. Again, a great nation like ours cannot stand still. It must either march on triumphantly in the van, or fall hopelessly into the rear. The measure of its works must, century by century, rise higher and higher in the competition of nations. Its great works in this generation can alone perpetuate its greatness in the next.

Let us look at the map: there we see, coloured as "British America," a tract washed by the great Atlantic on the east, and by the Pacific Ocean on the west, and containing 4,000,000 square miles, or one-ninth of the whole terrestrial surface of the globe. Part of this vast domain, upon the east, is Upper and Lower Canada; part, upon the west, is the new colony of British Columbia, with Vancouver's Island (the Madeira of the Pacific); while the largest portion is held as one great preserve by the fur-trading Hudson's Bay Company, who, in right of a charter given by Charles II. in 1670, kill vermin for skins and monopolise the trade with the native Indians over a surface many times as large again as Great Britain and Ireland. Still, all this land is ours, for it owes allegiance to the sceptre of Victoria. Between the magnificent harbour of Halifax, on the Atlantic, open throughout the year for ships of the largest class, to Fucus Straits, opposite Vancouver's Island, upon which are harbours equally eligible, intervene some 3200 miles of road line. For 1400 or 1500 miles of this distance the Nova Scotian, the Habitan, and the Upper Canadian have spread, more or less, in lines and patches over the ground, until the population

of 60,000 of 1759 amounts to 2,500,000 in 1860. The remainder is peopled only by the Indian and the hunter, save that at the southern end of Lake Winipeg there still exists the hardy and struggling Red River Settlement.

The combination of recent discoveries places it at least beyond all doubt that the best, if not the only, thoroughly efficient route for a great highway for peoples and for commerce between the Atlantic and the Pacific is to be found through this British territory. Beyond that it is proved that while no practicable passes for a waggon-road, still less for a railway, can be found through the Rocky Mountains across the United States' territory north-west of the Missouri, there have been discovered already no less than three eligible openings in these mountains once considered as inaccessible to man. While Captain Palliser prefers the "Kananaskis," Captain Blakiston and Governor Douglas the "Kootanie," and Dr. Hector the "Vermilion" pass, all agree that each is perfectly practicable, if not easy, and that even better openings may probably yet be found as exploration progresses. Again, while British Columbia on the Pacific possesses a fine climate, an open country, and every natural advantage of soil and mineral, it has been also discovered that the doubtful region from the Rocky Mountains eastward up to the Lake of the Woods contains a "continuous belt" of the finest land.

Professor Hind says:—

"It is a physical reality of the highest importance to the interests of British North America that this continuous belt can be settled and cultivated from a few miles west of the Lake of the Woods to the passes of the Rocky Mountains; and any



SIR EDWARD COLEBROOK, BART., MOVER IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF THE ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE ROYAL SPEECH.



THE EARL OF SEFTON, MOVER IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS OF THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.—SEE PAGE 147.

SLAVE AUCTIONS IN RICHMOND,
VIRGINIA.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

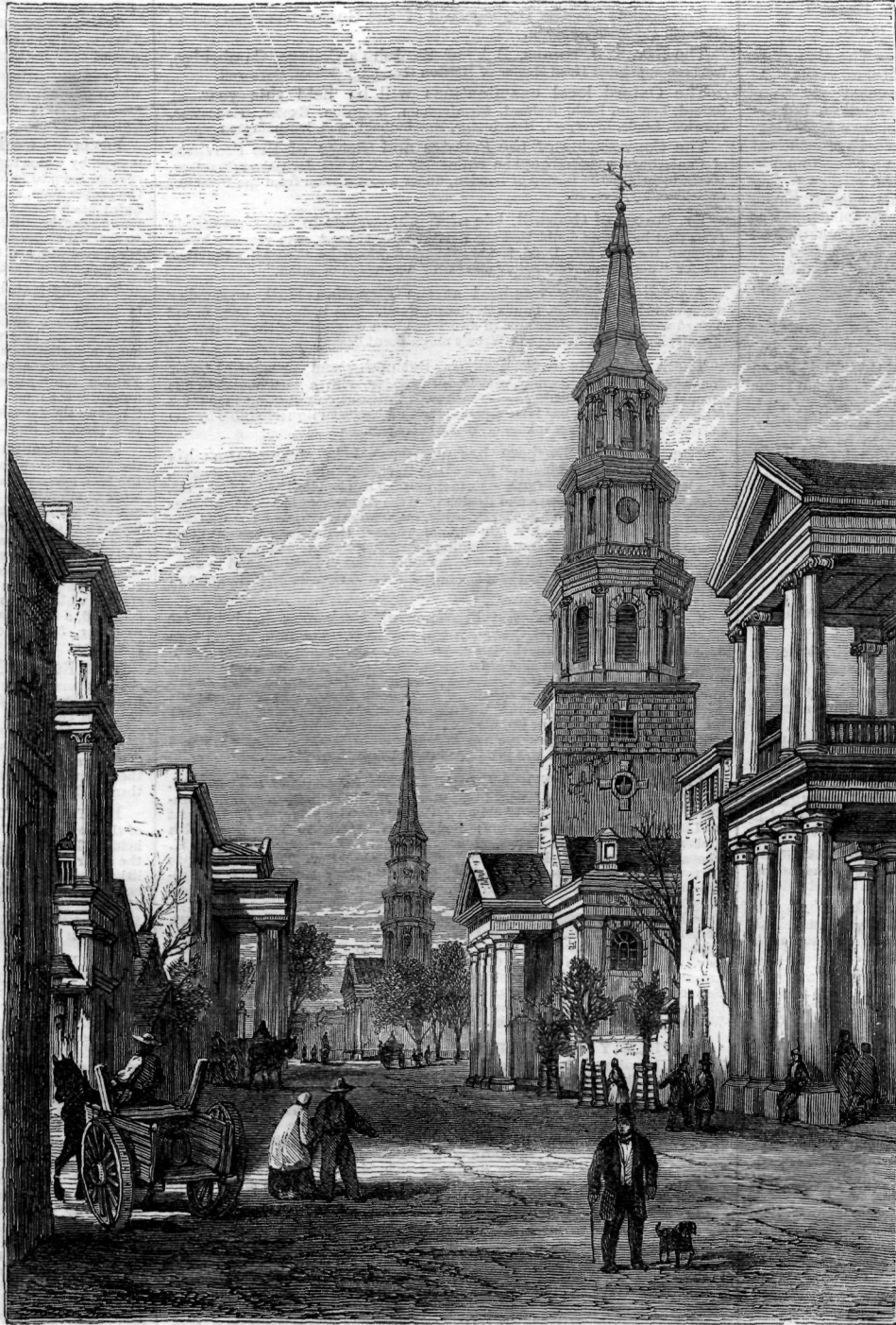
I ARRIVED in Richmond, the capital of Old Virginia, on a Sunday afternoon, and found the whole slave population in the streets. I was much struck with the general well-to-do look of these people, for I had imagined they would have wretched, down-trodden appearance showing marks of ill-usage, and be afraid to look up at strangers; instead of which I found them well dressed, well fed, and apparently happy and contented; but I was looking on the surface only, I suppose.

I had a letter of introduction to a gentleman in the city, which I lost no time in delivering, and explained to him that my object in visiting the capital of the Old Dominion was to see what I could of slave institutions, and more particularly a slave auction, with the intention of writing an account of it, and also making some sketches, if possible, to be published in an English newspaper. My friend said this was rather a serious matter, for the Southerners had been so grossly libelled and misrepresented by novelists and newspaper-writers that they had got into a bad habit of not thinking of them or treating them in a kindly spirit; on the contrary, they rather manifested a desire to tar and feather them. I begged of my friend to understand that if these very worthy people did object to my sketching and taking notes I would promise not to do anything of the kind, and I began to wish myself in the district of Columbia again, for a sensation of stickiness had come over me in consequence of his tar-and-feather allusions. However, he would consult, he said, with a gentleman of influence in the place, let me know the result, and advise me how best to proceed.

During the time he was absent I walked round the city, which is well built, chiefly of red brick and stone. The James River runs through it, entering at one end, a noisy torrent, tumbling helter-skelter over huge masses of rock, through a variety of channels, with beautiful picturesque islands between them, and running out at the other through quiet valleys and pasture lands. There are a dock and quay at the lower end, where small vessels lie, and a canal to connect the upper and lower navigations. Numbers of tall chimneys peer above the housetops, indicating the positions of the tobacco factories, which abound throughout the city.

Taking up a station on one of the great wooden bridges over the river, I had an excellent opportunity of observing the negroes of both sexes who were promenading along the road which passes over these structures: some thousands of them were out, all dressed in their best, in the height of fashion—negro fashion, of course. Scores of them passed and repassed during my stay there, all looking happy and contented. Some of the ladies were splendid in rainbow colours, wearing little pink or emerald-green silk bonnets hanging at the backs of their woolly heads, and bright orange-coloured shawls, which harmonised nicely with the skyblue satin ties with huge bows worn by the dark young gentlemen who were taking their "fair" ones out. But the great feature was crinoline; this was worn in quite an original manner, not as useful in expanding other draperies, but as a thing of beauty in itself. It was suspended loosely from the waist and was at least a foot from the ground, and, having scant drapery over it, it swayed to and fro in a truly graceful manner, at the same time exhibiting the beautiful feet of Dinah and the scarlet silk strings with which her shoes were fastened to them. One of the happy youths wore a white hat with a black crape band, his hat stuck on one side of his head in a jaunty manner, the black band put on as being ornamental; a blue dress-coat with gilt buttons, a yellow waistcoat, and pants covered with a large and ornamental pattern. Some wore the oldest and most threadbare of finery, but, however old, it was always something that had been fine, and was worn in that peculiar manner which indicates that the wearer believes himself or herself to be producing a very powerful effect.

On my return to the hotel I found my friend waiting for me; he had with him the influential person before alluded to, of whom I felt rather frightened at first, not forgetting what I had heard of these people's fondness for tarring and feathering. I liked him better, however, as our conversation progressed. He talked much like other people about slavery; thought it a very dreadful institution; but, having got it, and all their property embarked with it, it was not to be supposed they could give everything up at once at the bidding of New England parsons. He said that they were quite willing to discuss the thing in a statesmanlike and businesslike manner, and adopt such modifications in the system as would eventually place the negroes in a less degraded, and therefore better, position; but that the Northerners were continually threatening immediate abolition and proposing to use force to carry out their views; that they were determined to meet force by force, and that there was, in consequence, little chance of peace between them. He said they had been most foully slandered by Mrs. Beecher Stowe, that the incidents described by her as having all actually taken place were picked out of the events of fifty years, and yet made to appear as though they were every-day occurrences. He complained bitterly of the continual tampering with the negroes, abolitionist newspapers being conveyed secretly to such as could read, that they might read special articles to those who could not. All the persons present evidently thought that a



THE PRINCIPAL CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.—SEE PAGE 147.

rising of the slave population against the owners was quite possible in some of the cities, but that generally the blacks would stand by their masters. A gentleman present from New Orleans said that he owned about a dozen negroes, chiefly household servants; that the young ones had been born in his family, and the old ones had known himself and his wife since childhood that their affection for his family was of the

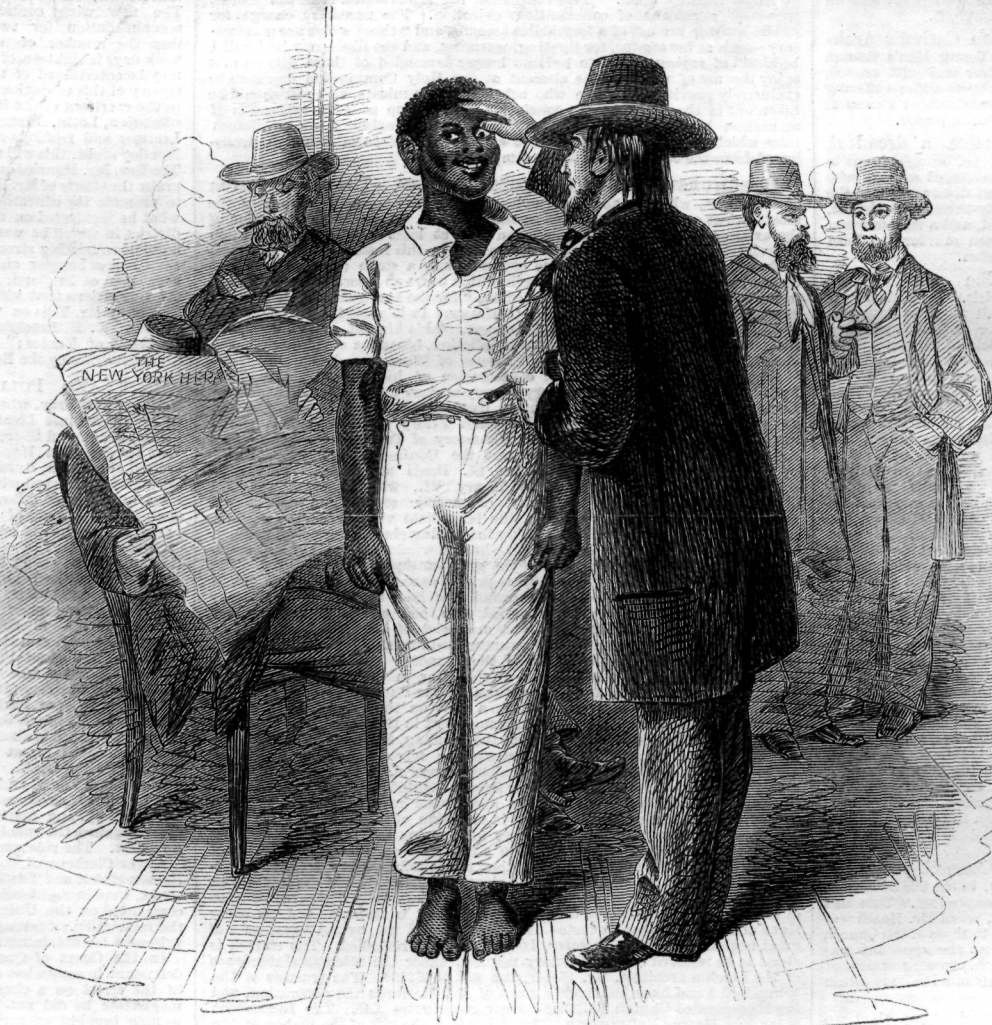
strongest possible kind, and they would all look upon leaving him as the greatest calamity that could befall them; he would be bound to carry them from New Orleans to Boston and back without losing one. Yet, said he, in spite of all this affection for my wife, my children, and myself, if a rising of the negro population took place I would not trust one of them; they would murder us all in our beds if they could, and then howl in sorrow and misery over the bodies of their victims; they would blindly, and without reflection, follow others, doing what they did, and be deeply sorry for it afterwards.

As for myself, my new slaveholding friend offered to show me everything I liked, and guaranteed that I should without molestation make what notes and sketches I pleased, on condition that I pledged my word of honour to tell the truth about what I saw, and to state that fairly and without prejudice, not taking any statements from other people or attempting to judge of that which I had not an opportunity of seeing. I of course promised to do this to the best of my ability, it being both reasonable and proper.

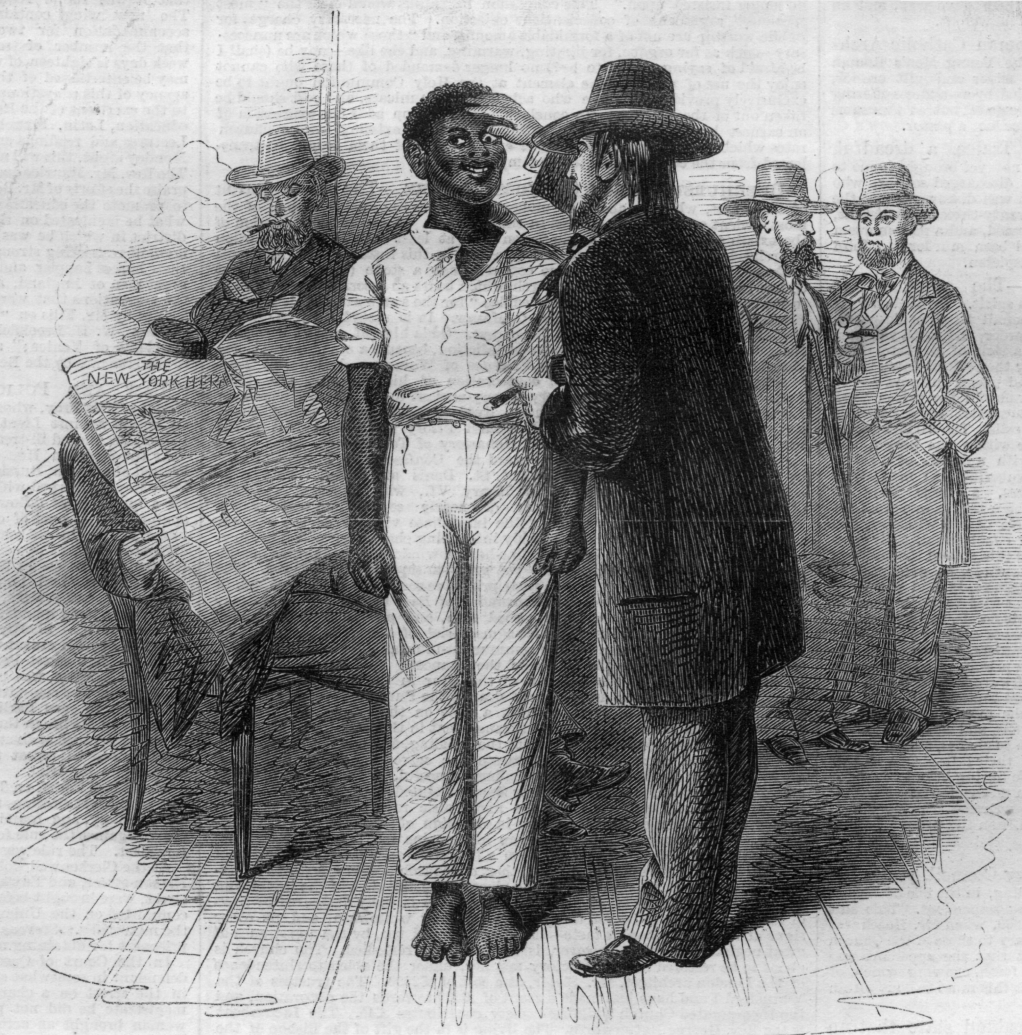
A carriage having been procured we drove into the country, calling at one or two places to see the negroes in their quarters, and very comfortable quarters too—little cabins of cottages, several in a row. The interiors looked very tidy, and the women and children seemed quite happy. They brought me milk and fruit, which appeared to be abundant.

The next morning I went out to visit the tobacco manufactories, and saw the different methods pursued in preparing and packing the various qualities of tobacco to suit the several markets it is intended to supply. In all these establishments negroes of both sexes and all ages were working, and in some cases singing most merrily. I watched narrowly the manner of the negro when called and questioned by his master. I did not observe anything like fear on the negro's part: master and servant seemed to be on friendly terms with each other, and I do not believe, from what I saw, that these workpeople were badly treated, generally.

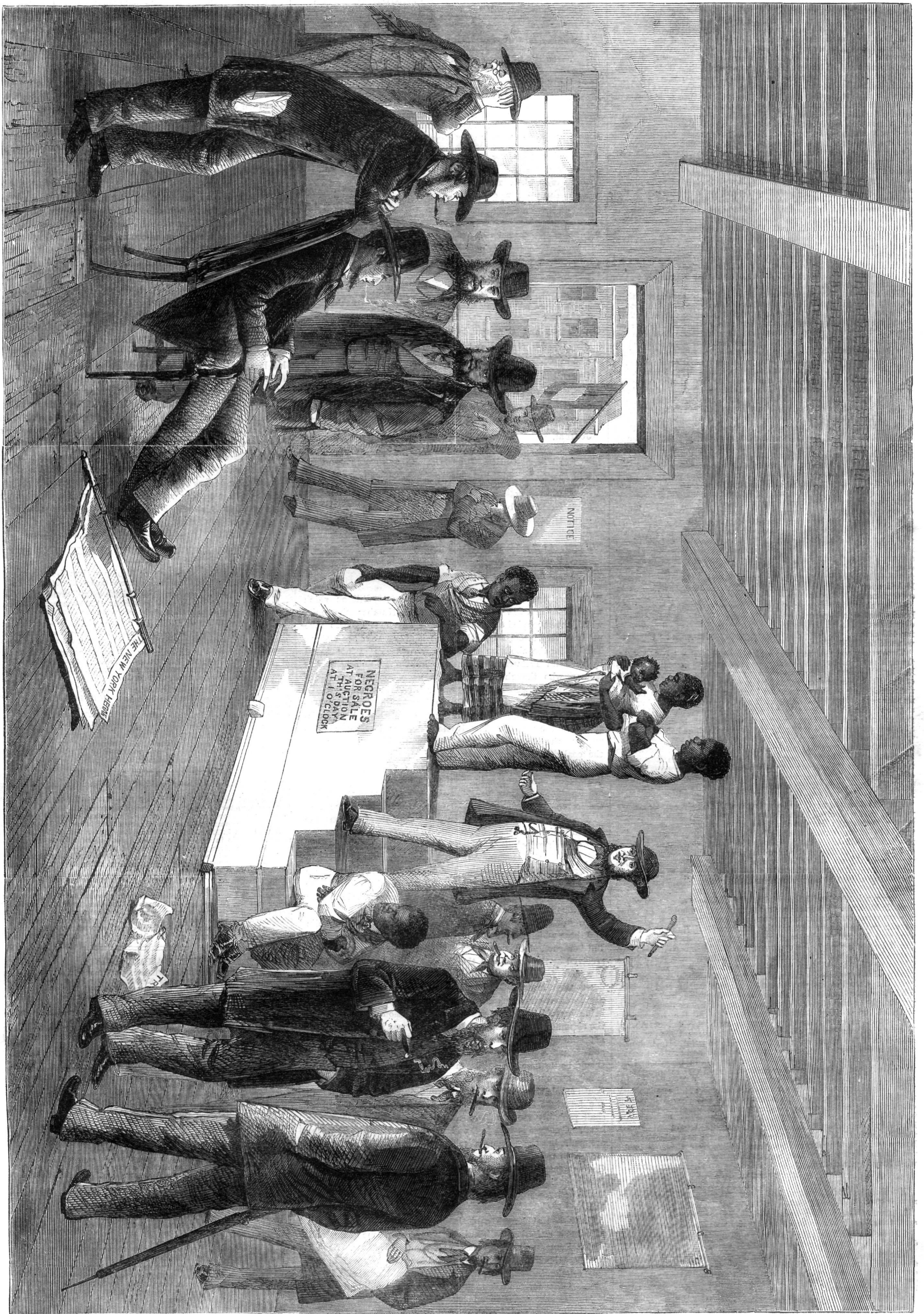
The auction-rooms for the sale of negroes are situated in the main streets, and are generally the ground floors of the building; the entrance-door opens straight into the street, and the sale-room is similar to any other auction-room. I observed that placards, advertisements, and notices as to the business carried on are dispensed with, the only indications of the trade being a small red flag hanging from the front door-post, and a piece of paper upon which is written with pen and ink this simple announcement—"Negroes for sale at auction this day at ten o'clock," or whatever other time the sale is fixed for. Besides this written notice and the heading to a sheet of letter-paper, I saw nothing in print or writing having reference to the sale of negroes—no catalogues nor descriptions of lots; nor could I find any advertisements in the local papers. My friend, having shown me the entrance to a room where negroes were about to be sold, told me to go in alone and sit down with the other persons there and look about. I accordingly did so, and put on a bold front. Being a little before the time fixed for the auction, I had a good opportunity to look at the crowd of men about me who dealt in human flesh, and I am bound to say that I saw nothing very dreadful in their appearance; they carried neither revolvers nor whips. They were not a gentlemanly-looking lot of men certainly, but seemed quiet, respectable, people, such as one might meet at a sale of books or old china in any part of London. At length a little bustle occurred at the back of the room, and a fine-looking coloured man was put forward. He walked straight up to the block, mounted it, and put himself in a most dignified attitude. The building in which this poor creature was about to be sold was built either for a mill or a granary; the ceiling was very low and of great strength, immense beams crossed it transversely, and the negro's black head stood out well against the great white beam at the back (for the whole interior was whitewashed) as he stood on the block evidently making the most of himself with a view of getting his owner as high a price as possible. He was a remarkably good-looking man, and although quite black had a finely-formed head; his forehead was broad and upright, and his features were all good, there being but little of the common negro type about him. I felt sure that a sculptor would have pronounced him by far the best-looking man in the room. A few steps lead to the top of the block (which is similar to those in common use in England for mounting horses), and upon one of these the auctioneer or crier, as he is called, stands, and a red-faced, impudent, vulgar-looking individual he was in this case. The crier, I believe, is not the auctioneer, but a man employed for the sake of volubility of tongue. To force the biddings, he described the negro as of such an age, such a height, sound in wind and limb, as being a good farm hand, could guide a plough, shoe a horse, and mend a hoe, but he was not a first-rate smith. Then the biddings commenced, and 800 dollars were offered. This sum was mentioned by the auctioneer, over and over again, as fast as he could utter it until a higher bid was made; he then took up the fresh bidding and repeated it in the same manner, hundreds of times, raising his voice each time until he had got to the top of it. At the same time he gesticulated violently, got himself red in the face, and became breathless. A higher bidding not coming forth, in spite of his exertions, he told the negro to get down and walk. He then stood aside to recover himself, and the negro paced up and down the room to show that he was sound on his legs. Some



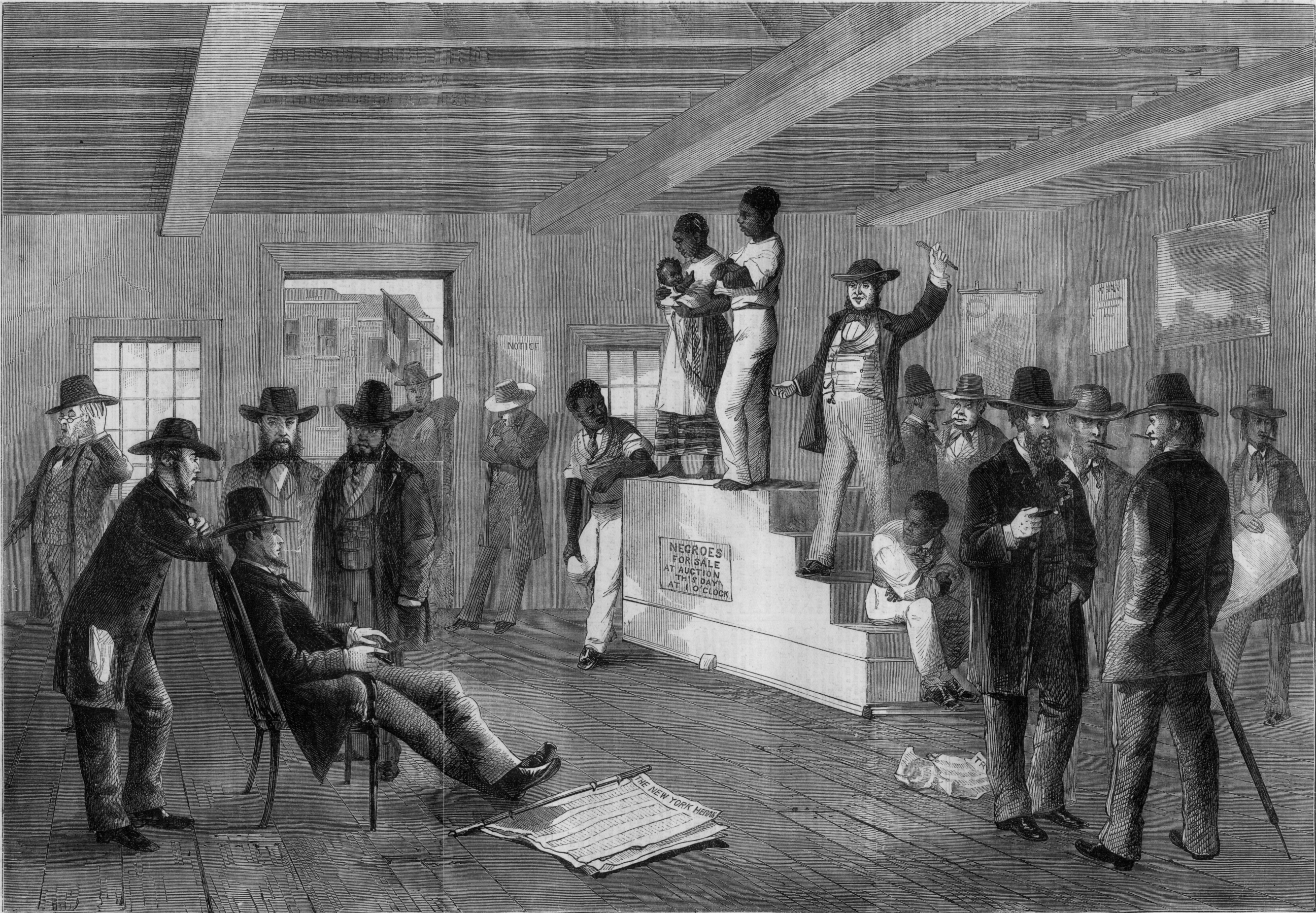
DEALERS INSPECTING A NEGRO AT A SLAVE AUCTION IN VIRGINIA.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.



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