

## Arab Slavery—The Other Side

Thank you for breaking the silence on Mideastern African slavery (VS, Feb. 28, 2004, C4). There has been a conspiracy of silence about the Arab slave trade, while the horrors of the Atlantic trade have been exploited endlessly.

There is another African story. *Less than a century ago*, Dr. Karl Kumm, an accomplished German geographer and founder of the Sudan United Mission (SUM), crossed Africa by horseback and foot. He wrote about the slave traffic from West to North Africa. He told of emirs raiding the territories of Traditionalists annually. In the process, they destroyed, killed and utterly devastated huge territories. He saw “close on 5000 square miles of territory absolutely depopulated by the ruling emir.” He witnessed “huge walled towns deserted, thousands of acres of farm land relapsing into jungle and an entire population absorbed. And this is... being done somewhere every day.”

Results? Women of Sara-Kabba stretched their lower lip to incredible ugliness to make themselves unattractive to slavers. Entire tribes withdrew into swamps or mountains for protection. When Kumm arrived in town, “he heard shrieks, a rush, a rustling in the grass, and there was silence. The entire village had decamped.” Until the British stamped out the practice, people did not dare spend the night on their distant farms as they commonly did afterwards under the British.