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SLAVES IN TORTOLA.

Return to an Address of The Honourable House of Commons,  
dated the 13th April 1824;—*for*

COPY OR EXTRACTS

Of any INFORMATION which has been received, and of any JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS which have taken place in the Island of TORTOLA, in consequence of some alleged acts of Rebellion or Insubordination of certain SLAVES belonging to the Estate of Mr. *Pickering*, in the Year 1823 :

VIZ.

N° 1.

Copy of a DISPATCH addressed to Earl Bathurst by Governor Maxwell,  
dated St. Christopher, the 16th February 1824.

N° 2.

Copy of a DISPATCH addressed to Earl Bathurst by Governor Maxwell,  
dated St. Christopher, 6th July 1824 ; with Two Enclosures.

Colonial Department,  
Downing-street,  
25th April 1825. }

R. J. WILMOT HORTON.

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
*25 April 1825.*

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—N<sup>o</sup>. 1.—

Copy of a DISPATCH addressed to Earl Bathurst by Governor Maxwell,  
dated St. Christopher, the 16th February 1824.

Government House, St. Christopher, 16th February 1824.

MY LORD,

PRIVATE information having reached me, that a communication has been made to your Lordship, relative to some disturbance among the negroes at Tortola; and as I have reason to apprehend this account may have been exaggerated in the details, I think it incumbent on me to put your Lordship in possession of the real state of the affair; from which your Lordship will probably infer, that it is not only in itself unimportant, but totally unconnected with the subjects which have been recently submitted to the Legislatures of these Colonies for their deliberation.

Mr. Pickering, the proprietor of Josiah's Bay estate, having arranged to remove the whole of his negroes to Trinidad, the latter had, in the first instance, expressed their readiness to undergo the change, but afterwards objected to it; some disturbance took place in consequence, and twenty of the most refractory escaped in a boat from the Island. They have since been brought back, and by the sentence of a bench of magistrates banished the Island; and, on the 22d November, were embarked for Trinidad.

The President of Tortola made this communication to me at the period when the circumstance took place, and his latest communication having intimated that nothing to interrupt the tranquillity of the Colony had occurred since the embarkation of the negroes, I considered the whole affair at an end, and I only now obtrude the subject on your Lordship's notice, lest any misrepresentation might induce your Lordship to apprehend the existence of any evil, and that I had been remiss in making your Lordship acquainted with the circumstances.

I have the honour to be,  
&c. &c. &c.

To the Right Honourable

(signed)

*Chas. W. Maxwell.*

The Earl Bathurst, K. G. &c. &c. &c.

—N<sup>o</sup>. 2.—

Copy of a DISPATCH addressed to Earl Bathurst by Governor Maxwell, dated  
St. Christopher, 6th July 1824; with Two Enclosures.

Government House, St. Christopher's, July 6th, 1824.

MY LORD,

AGREEABLY to your Lordship's instructions conveyed in Mr. Wilmot Horton's letter of the 10th of April last, I have the honour to transmit herewith a full detail of all the proceedings before the magistrates relative to the conduct of Mr. Pickering's slaves at Tortola, together with the report from the President of the Island.

From this Report your Lordship will learn the grounds on which I communicated to your Lordship the information contained in my dispatch of the 16th of February last.

Your Lordship will also gather, from the accompanying documents, that the conduct of the slaves on Mr. Pickering's estate, has at all times been disorderly and highly insubordinate, and that their recent conduct may be consistently attributed to the spirit of opposition arising out of the mischievous disposition that characterizes the gang.

The object of my dispatch of the 16th February, was to assure your Lordship, that the insubordinate conduct of Mr. Pickering's negroes did not arise from, or was not in any wise connected with the recent discussions in Parliament, on the amelioration of the negro condition. This I considered the most important feature in my communication

communication, as private information had reached me, that your Lordship had been made acquainted with the circumstances; and I felt doubtful whether, from imperfect information, your Lordship might not have inferred the existence of a more serious and a more prevalent cause of disturbance throughout the Colony.

I have the honour to be,  
My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,

To the Right Honourable (signed) Chas. W. Maxwell.  
The Earl Bathurst, K. G. &c. &c. &c.

Tortola, June 15th, 1824.

SIR,

IN obedience to your Excellency's directions, I have now the honour to transmit, so far as I am able to procure them, the proceedings of the magistrates who tried Mr. Pickering's slaves.

No papers have come to my hands, nor do I know where to find any, relative to their removal; nor can I give your Excellency any particulars of the case which induced Mr. Pickering to apply to me to give him the "assistance of the *posse comitatus* to secure their being embarked without disturbance," for in fact, no such application was actually made to me; by a reference to my letter to your Excellency on that subject, (of which being "private," I kept no copy) you will, I am pretty confident, see that my application and request of your Excellency's advice how to act in that matter was in consequence of my expectation of being called on for assistance; this expectation was grounded on the declaration of the people, that they would not go, which was repeatedly mentioned to me, and I was told by several persons that I should certainly be called on to assist in forcing them on board; fearful lest I might act wrong in so delicate a matter, and aware that there would be time to obtain your Excellency's advice, I prayed you to favour me with it; happily there was no occasion for me to perplex myself, for the negroes went voluntarily, at least, I heard nothing to the contrary.

I now transmit to your Excellency an official copy from the Secretary's office, of the proceedings on the trial of the negroes. It has never been the practice to take down the evidence given on any trials. The court has never directed it to be done; indeed it would, generally speaking, be very difficult, if not impracticable, for we have no reporters here. But I have uniformly made it a rule when I have sat on any trial, where the prisoner has been tried for his life, to take such notes of the evidence as might enable me to recapitulate the most material part of the testimony to my brethren who sat with me, when we retire to consult on what sentence is to be pronounced. I did so in this trial, and attach a literal transcript of my notes; except the latter part of Mr. Cother's testimony; this document contains very nearly the whole of the evidence given to the magistrates. Perhaps in this particular instance, it would have been politic in the manager to have overlooked the destruction, (great as it was) of the canes; but knowing this gang of Mr. Pickering's, as I do, I am confident any attempt to correct or even prevent their misconduct (especially at that time, when they were hesitating whether they would or would not go to Trinidad) would have brought on insubordinate, riotous, if not actually rebellious conduct. They have ever since I knew them, been turbulent and hard to be ruled. Early in the year 1789, the whole gang attacked the late Colonel Themasons (Mr. Pickering's then attorney), Mr Edward Cooke, a very respectable gentleman of the Island, who accompanied the Colonel to the estate, (the manager, Mr. Tierney) and the overseers who were present; they stoned them, and compelled them to take refuge in the house, which they repeatedly endeavoured to force; they continued stoning the house for hours, until assistance was procured from other estates, who liberated these gentlemen from their perilous situation, and guarded them in safety through the estate. On this occasion, several were tried; two were condemned to death, and executed, and three (I think) banished.

After Mr. John Pickering left this for England, the conduct of this gang of negroes was continually that of gross insubordination.

Immediately after our dreadful hurricane in 1819, they broke out into acts of rebellion, so much so, that Mr. Lettsom, the attorney, applied to the House of Assembly,

Assembly, stating that he considered his own life, and those of his family in imminent danger, and praying assistance; several were pointed out as ringleaders, and Mr. Lettsom conceived if they could be secured, the others would return to their duty. So rebellious was the conduct of these people at this period, that the council thought it necessary to apply to Admiral Campbell (who came here a few days after the hurricane), praying the assistance of the marines, to go on the estate, and secure the principal actors in this rebellion. The admiral ordered a party under arms for the purpose. Mr. L. was to have sent down a guide to carry them to the spot; the men were under arms on the Admiral's deck from three o'clock in the morning until nine, waiting for the guides, but Mr. L. having understood that the Salisbury was not to remain here, and fearing on her departure, that the people would be more violent, declined sending any one to conduct the boats to the proper place, or even to inform the Admiral that he did not wish to avail himself of the aid he had anxiously solicited.

On this day, I received a note from Mr. Lewis the manager, stating the conduct of the people, and praying me to come out, and bring one of the missionaries with me, to talk with the people.

I went immediately, as I then thought, at the risk of my life, and by temperate, and yet firm representations, to three or four of the most turbulent of the negroes, prevailed on them to abstain from further acts of plunder and insubordination.

On this occasion, the whole gang except four, left their work, and most of them the estate, and did not return until the fourth of October, nor would they consent to return there, until they compelled the attorney to discharge the overseer, with whose conduct he was so well satisfied, that although he did not want an overseer, he gave him employment on his own estate.

In November, 1821, Mr. Lettsom, with Mr. Pearson the manager, came before the Council, and stated the mutinous conduct of this gang of negroes.

I transmit to your Excellency a copy of the Minutes of Council on that day, and of Mr. Pearson's affidavit before the Board, from which it appears that Siah and Larkey, (two of the prisoners last tried) had previously been charged with very insubordinate conduct, in fact it seems they have ever been amongst the most active in any riotous or mutinous conduct which has taken place on that estate for some time past.

On this application to the Council, it was determined that an attempt should be made to get hold of the ringleaders, and a day was fixed for the purpose.

Circulars were sent to several of the gentlemen managing the different estates, requesting their attendance, with their principal negroes, to effect this; these gentlemen refused to go on this service unless some magistrate would accompany them, and no other being inclined to attend, I went with them. We secured only four, one of whom, Joe, was among the most turbulent of the people; the others being young, and in bad health, were not proceeded against, but reprimanded, admonished, and sent home.

On the 15th of December, Joe was indicted capitally under the second clause of the Slave Act, for absenting and withdrawing himself from his owner's service for the term of six calendar months in one continued space of time, of which offence he was found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned for one calendar month, to receive twenty-five lashes on his bare buttocks, on the 17th instant, and the like number of lashes at the expiration of the term of his imprisonment.

Mr. Lettsom thought it necessary to erect a dungeon on the estate; this was at last effected, but in the night after it was finished, the gang demolished it, this was done three times.

In fact, the conduct of this gang of negroes, has for many years been shamefully the reverse of what it ought to have been; and the country have reason to rejoice that such turbulent characters are removed from the Island.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

His Excellency Ch' W<sup>m</sup> Maxwell, Esquire,  
Captain General and Governor in Chief, &c. &c. &c.

Geo. R. Porter.

ENCLOSURES referred to.

Monday, 17th November 1823.

Before a Board of Magistrates.

Present,—The Honourable JOHN STOBO, esquire - - - Sitting Magistrate.  
 — GEORGE R. PORTER.  
 — WILLIAM R. ISAACS.  
 — WILSON LAWSON.

THE KING

*versus*

Bristol, Sciah, and Lankey, Slaves the property of the Honourable }  
 Isaac Pickering, esq.; also, Chance and Ruthy's George - - - } Felony.

WITNESSES.

Johnny, a Slave the property of said estate.  
 Harry - - - - d.  
 Michel - - - - d.

APPEARED personally Mr. Charles Cother, manager of Josiah's Bay Estate, the property of the said Isaac Pickering, and charged the first three Slaves, Bristol, Sciah, and Lankey, for that they on the twenty-second day of October were prominent characters in quitting their work, and surrounding the said manager with their bills in a threatening manner; which conduct was followed by the men gang, consisting of two-and-twenty, then at work, excepting two. The said manager also charges Bristol and Lankey with threatening the life of Johnny the head watchman on said estate; and the said manager further charges the said five Slaves, Bristol, Sciah, Lankey, Chance and Ruthy's George, with being in a state of actual rebellion at the time above-mentioned; and that they committed violent and rebellious acts for some days; and that twenty of the men gang, among whom were the aforesaid five men, run away from said estate, and were absent for some days, until they were driven in by hunters; and that during the time of their absence, the boat belonging to said estate was stolen by the said Slaves.

The prisoners severally arraigned, and pleaded Not guilty. John I. F. Pickering, esq. attorney to the Honourable Isaac Pickering, esq. present, and consented to the trial.

The Magistrates, after hearing the evidence produced against the said Slaves, and also what they had to say in justification of themselves, retired; and on their return, Ordered, That the said prisoners be remanded to the jail, and to be brought up to-morrow at the hour of twelve of the clock in the forenoon, then to hear their sentence.

Tuesday, 18th November 1823.

The Board of Magistrates met pursuant to adjournment.

Present,—The Honourable JOHN STOBO, esquire - - - Sitting Magistrate.  
 — GEORGE R. PORTER.  
 — WILLIAM R. ISAACS.  
 — WILSON LAWSON.

THE Magistrates unanimously find the prisoners guilty. They were then brought up and the following sentence passed upon them: *viz.* That Bristol, Lankey and Sciah receive each, to-morrow forenoon, between the hours of ten and twelve of the clock, sixty-three lashes on their bare backs with a cat-o'-nine-tails, twenty-one of which number to be inflicted on each by the corner of Blyden's Cane-piece, the same number opposite the Court House, and the same number at the foot of Clifton Hill.

That Ruthy's George and Chance do likewise receive each thirty-nine lashes in like manner with a cat-o'-nine-tails opposite the jail, and that after the infliction of the said punishment, they be remanded to gaol, there to be kept in close confinement in irons, until they can be transported from this Colony.

That they be all banished from these Islands for ever, so soon as possible, to such place as John Ferdinando Pickering, esquire, the attorney to the Honourable Isaac Pickering, esquire, the owner of the said Slaves, shall think proper; and if they or either of them the said Bristol, Lankey, Sciah, Ruthy's George and Chance, be ever found voluntarily at large again within any part of these Islands, they or either of them shall suffer death. And that all fees attending the prosecutions of the said Slaves be paid by the owner thereof or his legal representative.

(A true extract.)

(signed)

*Richard King, Jun.*  
Clerk of the Crown.

An exact copy of Minutes, taken in short hand, of the Evidence given on the Trial of Chance, Bristol, Sciah, Ruthy's George, and Lankey, Slaves the property of Isaac Bickering Esq.

Ch' Cother, sworn.—On the 22d October the gang was at work cutting bush, they came very late after breakfast; walking to Santlo's watch I found a large quantity of canes broken, told Andre to call Johnny and send him over to the south side where the negroes were at work; Johnny came to me, said that he had told Santlo to come (to Manager), but he would not come; witness went out after turn-out time to the gang and called Santlo, and asked him why he did not come; Santlo said he did not know what he wanted him for; witness ordered Santlo to go before him, which he refused to do, and went to his work; witness then ordered Phœnix and George to lay hold of him and carry him (Santlo) home; both of them said, he has a bill and will chop us, and then what service shall we be to our master or ourselves either; witness said, you have bills in your hands as well as he. Phœnix and George asked witness why he called on them rather than any other of the gang; witness told them, because they were next to him; witness then told the driver, if they would not lay hold of him (Santlo) to cartwhip them out of the field; they both, however, still refused. On this the whole, or nearly the whole of the men left their work, facing witness with their bills. On seeing this, witness put his hand into his pocket, and several cried out he has got a pistol; witness told them, if they thought proper to come he would know what to do with them. Witness then asked Michelle, the driver, if he could not make the negroes do their duty, or if that was conduct for a gang of negroes; driver began to swear at them and they resumed their work. By this time Johnny had come into the field, and told witness before the gang, that Santlo would have come when ordered, had not some of the negroes (Sciah, Normans, Jacob and Bristol, he believes) dissuaded him from coming. On this the negroes, particularly the prisoners, began to abuse Johnny, and said it was him that made the manager cross on them, that he was constantly carrying news to his master; they told Johnny to go home; he was going when Lankey and Bristol; Lankey had a stick and a bill in his hand, Bristol had a bill which he rose at Johnny, witness rode up close to Johnny and defended him; Bristol went down on his knees and swore to his God that he would take Johnny's life whenever he met him.

After this they returned to their work; Lankey had a stick with which he gave Cornelius a blow which made him reel, because he would not join him.

On Thursday the negroes had the day, on Friday they returned to their work, but would do little or nothing; on that day Mr. J. F. Pickering, the attorney, came out, when they saw him they all ran away except two or three, who also went off that night.

Witness was asked, if he had not been present what he thinks would have been done to Johnny? Witness thinks, that the negroes would have very severely illtreated him if not killed him. Mr. Cother then detailed the conduct of the whole gang who absented themselves, among whom were the prisoners, their stealing the boat, &c.; but these matters having been already known to the Bench, I did not take any minutes of that part of his evidence.

The court told the prisoners they were at liberty to ask the witness any questions. Chance asked Mr. Cother if he saw him go after Johnny; witness said he could not particularize any except Lankey and Bristol, he was more looking after protecting Johnny than after them. Bristol asked witness the same question, to which he replied, yes.

Johnny (a Slave of Mr. Pickering) sworn, (cautioned to state nothing but the truth; an intelligent youth).

Andre, the overseer, met witness, and told him, the manager ordered him to bring Santlo the watchman to him; witness went down to the field on the south side and told the driver, that the manager sent him for Santlo, that the driver told Santlo the manager called him; Santlo asked what for? Witness told him, he must come and see; Jacob Norman said, if I were you I would not go into the bottom; Bristol said to Santlo, if you go to the bottom they will make mutton out of your bottom; Lankey and Sciah said, if their own father came to the field for them, he must put up with what he got; witness told them, you are speaking ill language, putting bad in the boy's (Santlo's) head; told Santlo to go; Lankey and Sciah said the manager or massa might have come himself, or sent a smaller boy than witness; the manager went over to the field and left word, that Johnny (witness) and Moses should follow him there; witness went to the field and found manager there; witness then told them all to say to the manager what they had told him to tell manager; Lankey, Bristol and Sciah particularly came up close to witness; Sciah said, wherever he and witness met, there should be grave for one and gallows for t'other; Michellé and Phoenix tried all they could to keep them off witness (Johnny); Lankey particularly struck at witness; witness then went away and came to his master in town, as he was afraid to stay on the estate.

Sciah, Lankey and Bristol now asked Johnny if they were near him, or attempted to strike him, to which he replied to each, yes; and that as to Bristol, he said, they must take him (witness) away from the manager.

Harry, a Slave of Mr. Pickering sworn, examined as to his knowledge of the nature of an oath: Was the watchman in the yard? Chance, Sciah and Phoenix called to him, he came out of his house; Phoenix asked him to join them; Pompey came up and made a lick at him with a stick; Chance told witness, if you hit Pompey back he would kill him; as Chance tell him (witness), so he (witness) fell back; Chance, Bristol and Sciah were all there; witness asked them, what you want me to join for; Sciah struck him; Phoenix asked him to join to go in the bush and fight; witness refused, and than they struck him on the head, and Pompey struck him on his thigh.

Sciah asked witness if he struck him, if he drew any blood? replied, Yes, that he did strike him, and that he did draw blood, that the manager saw it.

Ch<sup>r</sup> Cother,—Asked by the Bench if he saw it? says, yes; the blow was on the back part of the head, which appears more bruised than cut, as if it had been done with a large stick; it was about four o'clock on Friday morning; Chance asked Harry if he did him any thing, says, yes, he collared him, and said, kill him.

Michelle, driver, belonging to Mr. Pickering, sworn,—Says, when manager came for Santlo, he, witness, called Santlo, and told him manager called him; Santlo said, the manager don't send me any where, what does he want me for? Lankey said to Santlo, are you going to north side, if you do they will make the devil come out of you; Bristol said to Santlo, are you going to day, if you go, what you get you must take it; Jacob Norman said, he must not go; Santlo did not go. On a question from the Bench, says, he thinks Santlo would have gone if these people had not dissuaded him; in the afternoon the manager came into the field and told witness he must order Santlo over, and ordered George and Phoenix, being nearest to Santlo, to lay hold of him; they both refused to do so, saying, Santlo had a bill in his hand; manager then told witness he must drive George and Phoenix out of the field, after they won't obey orders: they refused to go, after that they all began to quarrel with the manager; witness ordered them twice to mind their work, they would not; the manager then put his hand in his pocket and showed a pistol; some one said, if you shoot one you can't shoot two, and they all left their work; Johnny then came up (before this the gang had gone to work), manager told Johnny to go back, that the negroes had just done quarrelling with him; Johnny came notwithstanding; Bristol and Lankey asked Johnny if he carried news to the manager, Johnny replied, he just told the manager what they told him; Johnny was then going away; one word brought on another two; Lankey and Bristol went out of the field after Johnny; witness brought Lankey and Bristol back, but they went again after Johnny, and the whole gang followed them except Cornelius, Prince and John; witness was there, if he had not been there bad work would have followed, he went to protect Johnny; they did not strike Johnny; they made several attempts to do so but were prevented; they did not strike him; manager told them often, more than one time, to let Johnny



go, but they did not mind what manager said; Mr. Pickering came up on Friday, when the gang saw him coming, all except three (Cornelius Sues, Mosey and John,) went away; sent three messages to call the negroes back, but they refused to come; sent one message by John, who himself stopped and did not come back: Sciah asked witness if he neglected his work, says, no, except when he take a day for himself, which he very often did; none of the other prisoners asked witness any question.

(signed) *Geo. R. Porter*, President.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. Robert Lewis (who was the Manager on Mr. Pickering's Josiah's Bay Estate during the hurricane in 1819, and for some time after,) to the Honourable G. R. Porter.

DEAR SIR,

I EXPECTED you out yesterday, for to see the wounded; but as you did not come, I concluded it was for want of a horse; I therefore send a horse for you. When you are coming out, you will oblige me by calling on the Reverend Mr. Whitworth, and ask him for to ride out to the estate with you. Josiah's Bay negroes are in a state of open rebellion, and I make no doubt but a few words from their parson might have a good effect, and bring them to their duty. They will obey no orders; they only think of plunder, and destroying the property. Last night about seventy of them passed through the yard, and went to the south side, where there was two puncheons of corn meal, which they took by force from the watchman, and plundered every grain; the night before they took six sheep out of the pen. This ought to be represented and taken notice of by the government, and an immediate stop put to it, before it goes too far and spreads.

I remain, &c. &c. &c.

Josiah's Bay.

(signed)

*Robert Lewis.*

Virgin Islands, Tortola.

AT a Meeting of Privy Council, on Saturday the 25th October 1823,

Present,—The Honourable *GEO. RICHARDSON PORTER*, Esquire, President,  
 — *MARK D. FRENCH*, } Esquires,  
 — *WILLIAM R. ISAACS*, }

*John F. Pickering*, Esquire, attended, and laid before the Board a Letter he received this morning from Mr. C. Cother, his manager on Josiah's Bay estate, which was read, and is as follows:

To *J. F. Pickering*, Esquire.

DEAR SIR,

THIS morning, about four o'clock, the negro men passed through yard, armed with cutlasses, and some with bayonets and sticks. Phoenix accosted Harry, who was watching the yard, and asked him if he would not join. Harry observed, Join in what? Phoenix reply was, Join to go into the bush, and fight. Harry told him, No; that he would not have anything to do with him. Siah immediately knocked Harry down with a stick, and gave him a broken head, and a severe blow on the neck. After this they went off to the south side, with destroying a few more of Andrew's stock. From their manner this morning, it shows what their intentions are. I have not waited to learn of any of them, if any of them intends coming to their work this morning, as I think it best to give you the earliest information of their behaviour. Could you get the loan of a pair of pistols for me until this business is over? it will be no harm for me to be prepared in case they should make an attack.

I remain respectfully yours,

*C. Cother.*

Saturday 25th October 1823, 6 o'clock A. M.

AFTER some discussion on the matter contained in the preceding letter, It was resolved, That His Honour the President should issue circulars to the respective managers in the Island, requesting they would send out as many hunters as they could spare on Monday morning before break of day, and if possible to accompany them, to meet at the late Mr. Hetherington's Retreat estate, and from thence to proceed

proceed in such manner as they should judge proper, to apprehend and secure the runaway negroes from Josiah's Bay estate, who have behaved in a very riotous manner, and thereby involving the general vital interest and safety of all the Slaveholders of the Island.

A true copy of the Minutes of the Privy Council held on October 25th, 1823.  
(signed) *Daniel Fraser*, Clerk of Council.

Virgin Islands, Tortola.

Before His Honour the PRESIDENT, and the Honourable the Members hereinafter named, in Privy Council; viz.

The Honourable M. D. FRENCH,  
— WILLIAM GEORGE CRABB,  
— WILLIAM GORDON, Esquire;—

APPEARED personally, Isaac Pearson of Tortola, planter, who being duly sworn, made oath and said, That he took charge of Mr. Pickering's East End estate in April last; that until six weeks ago, the Slaves belonging to that estate behaved very well, from which time they have occasionally absented themselves, to the numbers of ten, twenty, and even thirty, two or three times in a week; that on his ordering some of them to be flogged for such gross misconduct, they defied him, and told the driver it was at his peril to touch him, he would be the worse for it; in consequence of which, the driver gave up the attempt he made to take hold of one of them.

Deponent further saith, that Harry is, in his opinion, one of the principal ringleaders; that he has been absent a week together frequently; Mary Ann's John, Phoenix, and Marian's Stephen, three brothers, are also ringleaders, and have committed the same offence; that Stephen was watchman in the yard one night in the last week, when deponent called him, and ordered him to go on his watch; he said that it was customary for the manager to give the watch supper and grog, which deponent refused; whereupon the said Stephen quitted the door, and when he was at a short distance from the door, he said, "I'll be damned, if I should meet Mr. Lettson, or Mr. Pearson (the deponent) in the night, I should not mind much breaking their heads with a stone." That on the same night, a calf, a sheep, and a hog, were taken out of the yard, and have not been heard of since; that he has reason to believe Stephen was concerned in the robbery, as in the middle of the night deponent called out, and could not discover any watchman in the yard. That Thomas, in the hearing of deponent, made use of the following expression, "That if Mr. Lettson did not put provisions on the estate, he must not show his face on the estate again." That at this time the allowance to each negro was two quarts of corn meal, and two mackarel, and also had Saturdays to themselves; that soon after, when provisions were scarce on the property, deponent was obliged to reduce the allowance to three pints per week, and two mackarel, which the whole gang refused on that occasion, and thirty-five of them took the afternoon to themselves.

That since deponent has been on the estate, the dungeon has been twice broken open, and the prisoners liberated, but by whom deponent cannot say.

Deponent further saith, That Bristol, Abraham, Scipio and Jeffry, Sciah and Lankey his brother, as also Sessman, are among the most insubordinate of the gang; that upon Maryann's Stephen being absent for two or three days, on his return, deponent ordered him to be taken out of the field to be flogged, but upon Andrew, who was then driver, attempting to bring him forward, he dared the said driver to lay hold of him; that he threw down his hoe, and said he could go to where he had been the day before, and went away; that on Friday night last, three hogs, two turkies and eight fowls were stolen from deponent, and on his accusing Lankey, who watched that night, of the theft, he said he took them, and would continue to take his hogs and fowls when he pleased.

(signed) *Isaac Pearson.*

Sworn to before me in Privy Council, this 27th November 1823.

(signed) *Geo. R. Porter*, President.

P A P E R S

RELATING

TO

SLAVES

IN TORTOLA.

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*Ordered by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*

*25 April 1825.*

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