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SHIP SNAKE.

RETURN to an ORDER of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 15 March 1839;—for,

A COPY of REPORT of Captain *Milne*, Commander of Her Majesty's Ship *Snake*, made to the Commodore on the *West India* Station, in consequence of Instructions from the Admiralty, relative to certain Atrocities alleged to have been perpetrated on board a *Portuguese* Slaver, captured by the *Snake*;—Also, Copies of or Extracts from any Reports of other public Officers in the *West Indies* on that subject.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 27 March 1839.

THERE are not any letters from Commander Milne containing the information required; but the information is contained in the following copies of letters from Commodore Douglas, and their Enclosures.

(signed) *H. F. Amedroz*,
Chief Clerk.

Admiralty, 22 March 1839.

Her Majesty's Ship *Magnificent*, Port Royal,
7 July 1838.

(No. 15.)

Sir,

HEREWITH I have the honour to enclose, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a letter I have received from Lieutenant Miller, of Her Majesty's ship *Snake*, relative to the revolting atrocities said to have been committed on board the Portuguese slave vessel *Arrogante*. As Mr. Miller was the prize master, and delivered the slaves over to the Custom-house at Montego Bay, I should think his letter of more consequence than any other; but I have written to the Collector of Customs at Montego Bay, and will forward his answer as soon as I receive it; and also Captain Milne's, on his return from the northward.

6 July 1838.
Copy enclosed.

I have, &c.
(signed) *P. J. Douglas*, Commodore.

Charles Wood, Esq.,
Admiralty.

Sir,

Port Royal, Jamaica, 6 July 1838.

HAVING, by your directions, this day read a letter from Mr. Evelyn of "Lucea," in this island, stating that the Portuguese crew of the slave vessel "Arrogante," captured by Her Majesty's ship *Snake*, made use of the bodies of the negroes which died, and also killed others, for the purpose of feeding the remainder, on her passage from the coast of Africa to the island of Cuba,

I have the honour to inform you, that I do not think this horrible transaction could have taken place, or if so, that I would have been informed of it, as at the time she was captured I was the officer that boarded her, and I remained in charge until I was condemned by Mixed Commission Court at Sierra Leone on the 6th March last, a period of 103 days. It appeared from the statement of the master, as well as from the log-book, that the *Arrogante's* cargo was shipped by a well-known slave-dealer

PAPERS RELATING TO

slave-dealer, of the name of Pedro Blanco, at the river Gullinas, on the 13th of October 1837, the whole number received being 470, and when captured she had on board 406, only 64 having died on the passage, which occupied a period of 40 days, and which I consider, from my own experience, having had charge of five slavers, an unusual small proportion. I have, however, a still stronger reason for supposing no such circumstance had ever taken place, as there were two male negroes on board who had before been captured on the coast of Africa, and liberated at Sierra Leone, but by some means kidnapped and again sold at the Gullinas; one of these men talked English distinctly, the other not so well, but sufficiently to be understood. I had frequent conversation with them, as I employed them as boat-swains to direct the others, and they never hinted at such a circumstance. The *Arrogante* was also abundantly supplied with provisions and water to complete her voyage, there being, as near as I recollect, about 100 sacks of rice, and 10 tons of water, on board at the time of capture, and she was then about four days' sail from her port of destination; under these circumstances, it is scarcely to be supposed they would be guilty of such a horrible crime, or that they would wantonly sacrifice to them such valuable property. The master, by name Augustus Cæsar Medina, is a native of Port Praya, in the island of "St. Jago," Cape de Verds, and he informed me he had been six voyages in the slave trade to the southward of the line, and appeared perfectly to understand the management of a slaver; during the time he remained with me he conducted himself in a quiet inoffensive manner, and, as far as I could judge, I do not think he would be guilty of such a horrible transaction.

I have, &c.

Commodore Douglas,
Port Royal.

(signed) *R. B. Miller*,
Lieutenant of H. M. S. Snake.

(No. 23.) Sir, H. M. S. Magnificent, Port Royal, 29 July 1838.
HEREWITH I beg to enclose, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of the depositions of three black men, who were landed in Montego Bay from the *Arrogante* slave vessel, captured by H. M. sloop Snake, taken by the Collector of Customs at Montego Bay, and will make further inquiries into this affair on the arrival of H. M. sloop Snake at this port.

I am, &c.

Charles Wood, Esq.,
Admiralty, London.

(signed) *P. J. Douglas*,
Commodore.

Custom House, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 17 July 1838.

BAMBOO, otherwise Thomas Phillpotts, an African, apprenticed to Mr. John Tucker Vaughan, of Greenwich Hill, pimento plantation, in the parish of St. James, apparent age 12 or 13, examined on parole, says, that when he was taken on board the slave ship, he was put down into the hold, as others were, and he was employed to wait upon the captain and crew; says that the captain and crew did not kill anybody on the voyage; and, when asked if he had not heard it said that they killed the negroes to feed the survivors, he said "them tell story." Says that when the negroes died, they were thrown into the sea, and were never served as food, or "messy messy," for other negroes. Says that he has heard reports that the negroes had been murdered, and served for food; but "them tell lie." He was above, and those below know nothing about it. They were fed with so so rice, that is rice only. One white man died, they put a cloth upon him, and heave him into the water.

Witness,
(signed) *P. Spencer*.

(signed) *Thomas × Phillpotts*,
his
mark.

Examined before me, in the presence of Mr. Surveyor Spencer, and Messrs. Forster & Davis, waiters and searchers, this 17th July 1838.

(signed) *John Roby*, Collector.

THE SHIP SNAKE.

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Custom House, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 20 July 1838.

KAI, otherwise John Thomson, apparent age 25 or 26 years, an African, apprenticed to Mr. John Campbell Marshall, fisherman, of Montego Bay, examined on parole (apparently not understanding the nature of an oath), says, when a little boy his father sent him to Cape Coast, where he learned English. This people fought with other people, and he was taken prisoner, and sold to the Spaniards (as he called them, but meaning, doubtless, the Portuguese), who put him on board the slave vessel; but he was placed in the hold, and never came on deck. The big men like himself were kept below, but little boys were allowed to go on deck. He and another man, named Tom, had bones with little meat upon them, given to them with the rice, but the rest of the people were fed with so so rice. That is rice only with a little salt. When any died below, it was told to the crew, who took up the body; but deponent being below, does not know what they did with it. He himself never saw any meat which he believed to be the flesh of man, but the bones given to him he was told were bones of cattle. Little boys said that they cut Spaniard man to pieces, and the blood ran down to where they the little boys were, but deponent knows nothing about it.

Witness,
(signed) *P. Spencer.*

(signed) *John × Thomson.*
his
mark.

Examined before me, in the presence of Mr. Surveyor Spencer, on this 20th day of July 1838.

(signed) *John Roby, Collector.*

Custom House, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 23 July 1838.

TOM, otherwise Thomas Bradshaw, an African, apprenticed to William Henry Knott, of Vaughansfield, cattle plantation, in the parish of St. James, apparent age 28 or 29 years, sworn, as he seemed to understand the nature of an oath: says, he once lived at Sierra Leone, and was sent up the country to buy rice and palm oil, when the people, being at war, took him prisoner, and sold him to the Spaniard-men (Portuguese), and they put him on board the ship, in irons. He was put in the bottom, and fed with rice and some meat; he did not go on deck, but was kept in the bottom; did not see anybody killed, and does not know what the meat was they ate, as they were kept down in the bottom. The meat given to them was bad, and made him vomit; it was blackey, blackey; could not tell whether it were beef or not.

He heard some of his countrymen say that Spaniard-men gave them man's flesh to eat, but being down at bottom himself, he does not know.

Witness,
(signed) *P. Spencer.*

(signed) *Thomas × Bradshaw.*
his
mark.

Sworn before me, in the presence of Mr. Surveyor Spencer, this 23d July 1838.

(signed) *John Roby, Collector.*

Her Majesty's Ship Magnificent, Port Royal,
14 August 1838.

Sir,

ENCLOSED I have the honour to transmit, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the letter I received from Mr. Roby, collector of customs at Montego Bay, which I omitted sending with the statements of the negroes in my letter, No. 23, dated 29th July 1838.

I have, &c.

Charles Wood, Esq.,
Admiralty.

(signed) *P. J. Douglas, Commodore.*

Custom-House, Montego Bay, Jamaica,
23 July 1838.

Sir,

IN compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 7th instant, and agreeably to the promise in my letter of the 10th, I have now the honour to enclose copies of the examinations of "Bamboo," otherwise "Thomas Phillpotts," and "Kai," otherwise "John Thomson," the two persons especially mentioned in your said letter; and also of "Tom," otherwise "Thomas Bradshaw," who was some time at Sierra Leone, and speaks English so as to be tolerably well understood.

I had the honour to acquaint you, in my letter of the 10th instant, that Walter Finlayson, esq., special justice, with an associate justice (R. B. Facey, esq.), had received orders from his Excellency the Governor to take examinations on the subject of the alleged atrocities committed on board the Portuguese schooner "Arrogante," prior to her capture by Her Majesty's ship "Snake;" and I enclosed copies of my correspondence with Mr. Finlayson thereon.

In my own examination before Messrs. Finlayson and Facey, I stated that the report of man's flesh (after decease, or the man being murdered for the purpose) having been served by the Portuguese (commonly called by the Africans Spaniard-men), as food for the survivors, being exceedingly prevalent, I inquired of very many of the Africans whilst under my care, but never found one who of his own knowledge could give any precise information; they all seemed to have heard it, and most of them seemed to believe it, but none that I examined had seen any one murdered, or knew that man's flesh had been served as food.

In the examinations of John Thomson and Thomas Bradshaw, here sent, there is nothing certain; they were kept below deck, and knew nothing of their own knowledge; whilst the examination of "Bamboo," otherwise Thomas Phillpotts, who was employed as waiting boy to the captain and crew, and was kept on deck, distinctly negatives the report: "Them tell lie; when the negroes died they were thrown into the sea, and were never served as food, or messy messy, for the other negroes."

Much of course must depend upon the numerous examinations taken before Messrs. Finlayson and Facey; but I am entirely ignorant of the depositions, or of the opinion formed by those gentlemen as the result of their examinations.

That the Africans had been dreadfully ill treated, the horrible state of disease and emaciation (the thighs of many not being thicker than my wrist) in which they were landed, besides the cases of cramped legs, and dropsy induced by debility, I think there can be no doubt; and the minds of the negroes being naturally exasperated against the Spaniards, would readily give credence to the horrible tale of their having been fed on the flesh of their companions. Whilst under my charge they were altogether during the day (the sexes being separated at night), and a tale of that exciting nature told by one would be communicated to all. Gentlemen, for whose opinions I have respect, have stated to me their convictions, founded on conversation with the Africans, that the reported atrocities actually took place. I own that, from my inability to obtain any direct testimony to the alleged facts from any person, and the positive contradiction by the intelligent little boy "Bamboo," who had the best opportunities of knowing the real state of the case, I am incredulous as to the pickling of human beings, and serving out for food.

I have, &c.

P. J. Douglas, Esq.,
Commodore R. N. &c. &c. &c.
Magnificent, Port Royal.

(signed) *John Roby*, Collector.

SHIP SNAKE.

RETURNS relating to the *Portuguese Slave*
Vessel captured by Her Majesty's *Ship Snake*.

(*Mr. Charles Lushington.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
27 March 1839.
