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DESPATCH**FROM****MR. CRAWFORD,****HER MAJESTY'S JUDGE IN THE MIXED
COMMISSION COURT****AT THE****HAVANA,****DATED FEBRUARY 5, 1861,****RELATING TO****CUBAN SLAVE TRADE.**

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1861.

LONDON:
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Despatch from Mr. Crawford, Her Majesty's Judge in the Mixed Commission Court at the Havana, dated February 5, 1861, relating to the Cuban Slave Trade.

Commissary Judge Crawford to Lord J. Russell.—(Received March 11.)

My Lord,

Havana, February 5, 1861.

IT is again my disagreeable duty to state to your Lordship that the Slave Trade continues to be carried on from this island upon the most extensive scale, and that so far from its having become odious in the opinion of the public, there are more persons, even of capital and influence, engaged in it than ever.

Her Majesty's Government have all along been made aware of the demoralising effects of this most abominable traffic, and that there were always to be found amongst the Spanish officials some who were so base as to sell their honour for a consideration. Many have been the victims of this venality, who have been dismissed from their commands, but in no one instance have we seen that the officers who have so disgraced themselves, and the Royal service to which they belong, have been otherwise punished or degraded; and thus it is, that having held an office or appointment long enough to enrich themselves by the bribes they have received, they are displaced, retain the money so acquired, and are suffered to retire on their fortunes.

This state of things, which began soon after the ratification of the Treaty with Spain for the abolition of the Slave Trade, has gone on and continues, and it is now most thoroughly systematised (by a tariff in some instances, the charge being paid to an agent), and the blood-money is divided according to a scale, the higher and lower officials receiving each their proportions.

To such a state of corruption and degradation has this infernal traffic reduced the people of this island and the Spanish officers, whose dereliction of duty has so dishonoured them, that several of the wealthy proprietors have lent their estates for hire, whereon new landed negroes have been afforded the protection accorded to the slave-trader by the Penal Law of 1845 (Article 9), and neither they, nor the Spanish officers who connived at the landing of the slaves so evading capture by being sheltered by the proprietors, are at all objects of detestation in the society of this slave-trading community, where the most notorious of those whose riches have been acquired in the African Slave Trade are loaded with the honours and decorations of Spain. Some of them have even been ennobled on the recommendation of certain Captains-General, who could not have been ignorant of their slave-trading successes, and such recommendations Her Catholic Majesty could not have imagined would by possibility have been given in favour of men whose characters were so intimately known to Her Majesty's Representatives, as that common report mixed up those high officers with the slaving adventures of the now titled traders, in so far as connivance at the introduction of them into this island for a valuable consideration.

At the date of the Treaty with Spain for suppression of the Slave Trade, the mortality of that unfortunate race was estimated variously at from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 per cent. per annum. That Treaty, and our efforts to check the Traffic, had the effect of raising the price, and consequently it produced better treatment of the slaves, and a diminution of the average mortality to about 5 per cent.

Upwards of twenty-five years have elapsed; and it will be evident to your Lordship that had there not been a continuous and enormous importation of Africans, slavery would, at this date, have been almost extinct in Cuba, instead of there being really more slaves now in this island than there were in 1835.

General Concha, notwithstanding the immense number of slaves which were imported during the long period of his second appointment here, assured his

Government that slave-trading was almost put an end to ; whereas, in reality, the Traffic during that period of his Excellency's administration was carried on with much more vigour and success than it had been in the time of General Roncali. I regret to say that it is fully as extensively prosecuted now, under the government of General Serrano.

The vessels employed in carrying on the Slave Trade have mostly been American-built, ships well known for their sailing qualities being of course preferred, and these were sought after and purchased here and elsewhere, their fittings and Spanish crews were put on board here and at the outports, or neighbouring cays, whence they proceeded on their voyage to Africa ; but since the year 1858, when there was such outcry about our cruisers in these waters boarding American ships, the Traffic has been almost exclusively carried on by vessels under that flag, which fit out and sail from the United States, and such has been the effect of the impunity enjoyed by the slave-traders, that the American masters and crews no longer hesitate to continue on board, and have brought all their energies and cunning into operation to avoid their own Government cruisers, as well on the coast of Africa as in the waters of Cuba, from the last mentioned of which, all Her Majesty's vessels of war have been withdrawn for the last two years.

The number of Spanish ships has consequently become small that are engaged in the Traffic.

Under the flags of other nations there are slavers now and then, such nationality being assumed for the purpose of evading Her Majesty's and the United States' cruisers.

Lately some adventurers have proceeded to the Slave coast under the flag of France, and the ship "*Don Juan*," that left this port 11th of August last, has just succeeded in landing her cargo of 607 slaves. The master, Gallet (a member of the Legion of Honour), and the crew, after destroying the ship, landed at Cardenas, were from thence sent on prisoners to this place, and, without any investigation, they were placed at the disposition of the French Consul-General ; their story, that the ship had sprung a leak and that they had been obliged to abandon her at sea on her voyage to China was, it seems, believed by the authorities.

The difficulty the slavers have to contend with is, their capture on the Coast of Africa. There is, I believe, no instance of a slaver escaping with her cargo from thence, being unable to effect a landing here ; some few, it is true, have been fallen in with and captured by Spanish ships of war, but with these exceptions they have always been able to bribe the local authorities ; and although the head or blood-money which it costs them to land their slaves is an enormous tax, the price obtained for Bozals has been such, for some time past, as is highly remunerative.

Lucumis have averaged 1,200 dollars each at the place of landing, so there is a large margin for the adventurer wherewith to meet the expenses, which I thus estimate :—

	Dollars.
Cost of vessel and provisions	25,000
Cost of 500 negroes at 50 dollars	25,000
10 per cent. mortality	2,500
Wages and gratifications to master and crew	30,000
Blood-money for landing 450 slaves, at 120 dollars each	54,000
	<hr/> 136,500
1 year's interest till paid, at 10 per cent. per annum	13,650
	<hr/> 150,150
Sale of 450 slaves at 1,200 dollars each	540,000
	<hr/> 389,850
Profit on the adventure	389,850

But the actual outlay in case a slaver is captured empty, but fully equipped, is only the cost of the ship, provisions, and interest thereon, say, 27,500 dollars, because the wages and gratifications are contingent, payable only if the adventure is successful ; the loss by capture with the negroes on board would amount to 55,000 dollars, and no more. Consequently it will be evident to your Lordship that the safety of one adventure amply repays the slave-trader for the loss of ten of his vessels if taken without slaves on board, or for five which may be captured after shipment of the negroes at the coast : facts which sufficiently account for the increase and continuance of this detestable Traffic.

It is clear, at least we have had the experience of more than twenty-five years, that no efforts have been made by Spain to put an end to the Slave Trade ; we need

never expect the fulfilment of the Treaty of 1835 by a people who consider the obligations therein come under, as detrimental to the interests of this island, which has, since the suppression of the Traffic with Brazil, become almost the only market for the slaves brought from the East and West Coasts of Africa. I most decidedly beg leave to state this as my opinion to your Lordship, after the experience and observation of nearly nineteen years' service here. There is no intention on the part of the Spanish Government, or its officers, to carry out the provisions of the Treaty. There is no faith or belief to be attached to their promises or professions in that respect; on the contrary, their whole study is, how to evade their performance. The Penal Law of 1845 seems to have been compiled to protect the slave-traders; we have seen that it does so very effectually, and that there always have been the means devisable to screen from punishment every one implicated directly, or conniving at the importation of slaves, which is prohibited by the Treaty.

I have shown your Lordship the temptations there are for launching into the African Slave Trade; that the slaver can suffer ten captures of ships equipped, or five of ships with the negroes on board, for one successful adventure. I have shown how that one successful adventure enriches the corrupted Spanish officers and authorities, high and low, consequently demonstrating the interest they feel in its continuance; and that the Island of Cuba is now the only market for slaves in the Western World.

We have therefore now to abandon our efforts of persuasion with Spain to put an end to the Traffic, if our past experience is sufficient to prove to Her Majesty's Government the total want of any real intention on the part of that of Her Catholic Majesty to fulfil the engagements of the Treaty, and proceed to the immediate adoption of the most energetic measures to compel its observance, or submit to the machinations of these people, who have hitherto succeeded in rendering that Treaty a dead letter.

It has been argued, as an excuse for the representatives of the Spanish Government here in Cuba, that such is the necessity for labour, and the consequent odium of the inhabitants of any stringent measures which might be adopted for prevention of the Slave Trade, such as the seizure of newly-imported negroes and the punishment of the traders, that, were they to be put in force, they would give rise to disaffection, and might endanger the safety of the island.

I am quite satisfied that this is not only a groundless apprehension, but it is an invention connected with the dread of the carrying out of any measures for suppression of the Traffic, putting an end to the sources of enormous gains resulting from the bribery and corruption which at present exists.

The Government of Spain, if resolved to put an end to the Slave Trade, and fulfil their obligations to Great Britain under the Treaty for its suppression, has the means here at command; they can do it whenever they please, and it would not affect their dominion of the island, nor endanger its safety as a dependency of Her Catholic Majesty.

Nor is it a wise policy which is practised by Spain in conniving at the introduction of slaves, and the continued infractions of the Law and the Treaty for the suppression of that unholy Traffic. On the contrary, I think that the calculations which I am about to adduce will prove to your Lordship's satisfaction that it must be productive of the most ruinous consequences, and that the Cubans cannot compete, in the growth and manufacture of sugar, with the free labour of the British Islands.

The present cost price of the Bozal negro is 1,200 dollars. This is the basis of the following note of the annual cost of a slave so paid for, viz. :—

	Dollars.
Interest at 15 per cent.	180
Mortality, 25 per cent.	300
1½ year's instruction divided over 20 years, estimated duration of life, 7½ per cent. of cost	90
Food, clothing, and medical attendance, at 10 dollars a month	120
Cost of a year's slave labour	690

Or 57 dollars 50 cents a-month, equal to 11*l.* 10*s.*, or 8*s.* 10*d.* for each of the 313 working days in a year!

I respectfully submit to your Lordship that no agricultural produce will be sufficient for such wages, and that ruin must follow to all who are engaged in such enterprises.

The advocates of slavery will say, perhaps, that the above calculation is extravagant. My answer is, that the price has of late been very currently paid for Bozal negroes; that money cannot be raised by the planters so cheap as 15 per cent. per annum; that the mortality frequently exceeds 25 per cent., and is seldom less; that the period for instruction is not over-rated, and is founded on information I have obtained from experienced planters; and that, at the most exorbitant prices of every necessary here, the slave cannot be clothed, fed, and attended to for less than my estimate.

Turn we then to an estimate of the cost of labour by the Chinese coolies, of which I do myself the honour of presenting to your Lordship the following estimate.

Cost of a contract for eight years, 340 dollars :—

	Dollars.
Interest at 15 per cent. on year	51
Wages 4 dollars, food, clothing, and medical attendance 10 dollars	168
Mortality, 5 per cent.	17
Instruction, 6 months on 8 years	21
Total annual cost of labour	257

or 21 dollars 41 cents, or *4l. 5s. 9d.* per month, equal to about *3s. 3d.* a-day, of the 313 working days there are in a year, which compares very unfavourably with the price of labour in Her Majesty's West India Colonies.

It is possible that, if Her Catholic Majesty's Government could be convinced of the gradual, but no less certain, ruin of the whole agricultural interests in Cuba to which such wrong policy must lead, they would issue orders to be carried into effect, at all hazards, for suppression of the Slave Trade.

But I must respectfully observe to your Lordship, that should a proposal which has been made to that Government, and which is now being urged by every means and influence at Madrid, be approved, the object of which is, the importation of negroes from Africa, under contracts for a period of years, as free labourers, the parties here, projectors of this speculation (for it is nothing else), are well aware that the negroes in Africa will not willingly contract themselves to come here and work; and I have good reason for stating to your Lordship that their plan is to contract with the Kings for all the prisoners they can deliver at certain places at so much for each, and the farce of a contract is to be enacted, when, in reality, the basis is slavery, and every negro has been paid for by the Company that is to engage in this new deception, which is only awaiting the sanction of the Spanish Government to be carried out on a very extended scale, by parties of great wealth and influence.

I shall conclude this despatch, which has become too long under the excitement of the subject, by inclosing to your Lordship a short statement of the slaves introduced successfully, and of those captured during the past year of 1860, intelligence of which has reached this office resulting as follows :—

		Captured.
Landed.. .. .	18,671	3,642
Add one-third	6,224	
Total	24,895	3,642

and it appears by the Consular archives, that upwards of 50,800 Chinese have been brought here since the year 1847, nearly all of whom with exception of the usual mortality remain, and, in general, they are not desirous of returning to their own country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOS. T. CRAWFORD.

P.S.—The slaves are worked on Sundays as well as week days; so for them there are 365 days in the year, which reduces the cost of their labour to their masters to *7s. 6d.* a-day.

Reducing the allowance for deaths to 10 per cent., which is very much under the mark for new negroes, the cost of labour on 365 days in the year comes to *5s. 6d.* a-day.

Putting the cost of the Bozal at 600 dollars, or half of what has of late been currently paid by the planters, and mortality at 10 per cent., the slave labour comes to 3s. 6d. a-day.

On the above calculations there is no allowance for sickness, &c., and the most intelligent planters rate this at 1 and 1½ days a-week.

Inclosure.

ABSTRACT of the Number of Slaves known to have been landed in Cuba during the Year 1860; Proportion captured, &c.

	Number of Slaves Landed.	Number Captured.	Taken to Nassau.
Reported from 1st January to 30th September ..	12,060	1,433	364
Landed from 30th September to 31st December ..	6,611	2,209	
	18,671	3,642	364
Add one-third	8,224		
Totals	24,895	3,642	364

Havana, December 31, 1860.

(Signed)

JOS. T. CRAWFORD, *Commissary Judge.*

CUBAN SLAVE TRADE.

DESPATCH from Mr. Crawford, Her Majesty's
Judge in the Mixed Commission Court at the
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