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SLAVE TRADE. No. 1 (1877).

REPORT

FROM

HER MAJESTY'S CONSUL AT JEDDAH

RESPECTING A

FUGITIVE SLAVE

WHO ESCAPED TO

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "FAWN."

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1877.

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Report from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting a Fugitive Slave who escaped to Her Majesty's ship "Fawn."

No. 1.

Vice-Consul Wylde to the Earl of Derby.—(Received March 26.)

My Lord,

Jeddah, February 17, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Lordship's despatch dated 23rd January, inclosing copy of a report that appeared in the "Times" newspaper, regarding a fugitive slave that swam off to Her Majesty's ship "Fawn," and a copy of a letter from the Anti-Slavery Society.

In reply to your Lordship's letter, I have the honour to inclose the deposition of the slave, taken by Mr. Oswald, who was then Acting Consul, which explains fully the slave's complaint.

Captain Wharton, of the "Fawn," under the circumstances, could not have acted otherwise than he did in the matter, and if he had retained the slave on board, such a proceeding would have acted as an inducement for others employed in the small sailing craft, and to domestic slaves on shore, to take refuge on board his ship.

Your Lordship is doubtless aware that in a fanatical country like the Hedjaz, where domestic slavery has been an institution from the time of Mohammed, it must always be a matter of extreme delicacy to interfere between master and slave, and when cases do arise where the Consular protection is invoked, non-residents can scarcely appreciate the difficulty there is in dealing with such cases, and the tact that is required to arrange them amicably.

The invariable custom of this Consulate has been to give shelter to any slave belonging to a Turkish subject who seeks protection, to inquire into his grievances, and to send him over to the Governor of the town, accompanied by a representative of this Consulate, to be given up to his master, on the latter promising to treat his slave properly and kindly, and assuring the Governor that there shall be no further cause for complaint.

The result has been satisfactory in most cases, and many slaves that have complained at the Consulate I have often seen subsequently about the town, and they say they are happy and contented.

The domestic slavery of Jeddah does not partake of any hardships that are usually attached to slavery.

The slaves, as a rule, are treated well, and properly fed and clothed.

In such a large community as Jeddah there are, of course, some instances where too severe punishment is given by the master for offences committed, but there has never been a flagrant case of cruelty brought before this Consulate.

I trust, my Lord, that this explanation will be deemed satisfactory.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. B. WYLDE.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Examination of a male Slave (a fugitive on board Her Majesty's ship "Fawn," handed over to this Consulate by Commander Wharton, R.N.) The Slave swam on board on the morning of the 10th, the "Fawn" being at anchor in Jeddah harbour.

MY name is Moorjan, 10 years old (apparently about 20). I am a Nubian from Ktoganoto. I was smuggled away by slave-dealers when quite young. My parents are still there or were left there. Was driven to Berber and Kosseir. Was brought

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with eight slaves by sea to Jeddah. Was sold by a slave-dealer here to Ibrahim Ajātāu this year. I don't know for what price. Had been employed in a boat in the harbour landing cargo and passengers. My master has been making me fill ballast for steamers lately, and it is too cold. I cannot work every day on the reefs. No one told me to go to an English steamer. I knew from my heart that I would be better on board an English vessel. My master has not beaten me. I refused to stay because it was too cold to work in the water getting ballast. My master does not give me clothes enough.

The owner of the slave, Ibrahim Ajātāu, a boatman, to be called to the Consulate, requested to clothe and feed the said slave with proper attention. The slave to be handed over to his owner by the Kaimakam in presence of the Consular Dragoman.

(Signed) J. S. OSWALD, *Acting Consul.*

Jeddah, December 11, 1876.

No. 2.

Consul Beyts to the Earl of Derby.—(Received April 9.)

(Extract.)

Jeddah, March 25, 1877.

WITH reference to the inquiry made in Foreign Office despatch of the 23rd of January, relating to a slave who had swum off to Her Majesty's ship "Fawn" at Jeddah on 10th December last, and who was sent to the Consulate by Captain Wharton of that vessel, and who, when on inquiry, proved to be the slave of a Turkish subject, and claimed by his master through the Governor, was delivered up to that official by the Acting Consul, Mr. Oswald, in conformity with rules laid down by me for dealing with such cases, I regret that in this special case, in which one of Her Majesty's ships was concerned, the Acting Consul did not deem it necessary to make a report, but treated it as an ordinary frequent occurrence to be summarily dealt with by the usual reference to the Governor.

In manumitting all slaves belonging to British subjects at Jeddah who present themselves at the Consulate, I have carefully avoided interfering (beyond interposing for kinder treatment when necessary) with those who are proved to be the slaves of Ottoman subjects, and claimed by them as domestic slaves. One-half of the population of Jeddah consists of slaves of this class, who, as a rule, are well treated and cared for, but nevertheless they have frequently run away from their masters at Medina, Mecca, and Jeddah, with the hope of obtaining their freedom at the British Consulate. Instances have occurred when such runaway slaves were found to belong to the authorities of Mecca and Jeddah, or men of high position living in the town. At first, when detaining them for a short time with the view that they may be satisfactorily identified before being delivered up, some commotion was created, when the Governor, taking alarm, begged that I would not offer encouragement to the run-aways by bestowing even such temporary refuge as two or three days at the Consulate, as the Arabs were talking loud about it; and should any emergency arise, with the few troops at his command, he could not ensure protection to Europeans.

The case in question which forms the subject of agitation at home is misstated and exaggerated. The slave was claimed by his master through the Governor as the slave of an Ottoman subject; he was not delivered up by the Acting Consul before he was satisfied of that by the slave's own admission to the fact, or before the usual interposition had been made with the Governor for kinder treatment from the master on his behalf.

I trust your Lordship will consider that the Acting Consul, beyond unfortunately failing to make an official report of the case, and thus erring in judgment, has otherwise acted rightly in delivering up to the local authorities a slave claimed by them as belonging to an Ottoman subject.

REPORT from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah
respecting a Fugitive Slave who escaped to Her
Majesty's Ship "Fawn."

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Com-
mand of Her Majesty. 1877.*
