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SLAVE TRADE. No. 4 (1877).

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

SEIZURE OF SLAVES

ON BOARD THE

“ROKEBY” AND “KOINA,”

BY

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP “RIFLEMAN.”

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

LONDON:

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Correspondence respecting the Seizure of Slaves on board
the "Rokeby" and "Koina," by Her Majesty's Ship
"Rifleman."

No. 1.

The Secretary to the Admiralty to Sir J. Pauncefote.—(Received April 30.)

Sir,

Admiralty, April 26, 1877.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a letter from Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald Macdonald, the Commander-in-chief on the East India Station, dated the 1st instant, with copies of its inclosures from Commander Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," relative to the seizure of slaves on board the British steamers "Rokeby" and "Koina," and I am to request that you will draw the attention of the Earl of Derby to the suggestions of Commander Clayton in paragraph 4 of his despatch of the 21st March, for remedying the abuse of giving passenger tickets without any names, and furnishing no passenger lists to the masters of the ships sailing from Jeddah.

I am, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT HALL.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald to the Secretary to the Admiralty.

Sir,

"Undaunted," at Bombay, April 1, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the letters noted in the margin from Commander Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," Senior Officer in the Gulf of Persia, having reference to the seizure of slaves on board the British steamers "Rokeby" and "Koina," and to the system of shipping Hadjis at the Port of Jeddah in British vessels by which a large number of slaves appear to be imported to the Persian Gulf.

2. The steamer "Rokeby," of West Hartlepool, 734 tons register, owned by George Pyman, senior, was searched at Bushire by Commander Clayton, on March 13, 1877, and six female and two male slaves were released and handed over to the Resident to be by him forwarded to Kurrachee or Bombay.

The owners (who are Turkish subjects with one exception) have been handed over to their Consul, who will forward them to Bussorah, and the case of a Persian owner will probably be dealt with at Bushire.

3. As it was impossible to prove wilful receipt of slaves on board, there being not the slightest evidence that the master and crew were aware that the persons above enumerated were slaves, the vessel was released after further inquiry at the Residency on the 14th instant.

4. The steamer "Koina," of Bombay, 704 tons register, owner Eysa-bin-Kalifah, was searched at Muscat on 20th March, and twelve slaves were taken therefrom, and condemned in the Consular Court with Slave Trade jurisdiction at that port.

5. In this case the master of the steamer (William Morrison) denied all knowledge of slaves being on board his vessel; but Commander Clayton is of opinion that from the fact of the master of the "Koina" having been ten years in the Persian Gulf trade, he must have been well aware that one passage-ticket, marked for one man and six boys,

was almost certain to be for slave boys; nor had Commander Clayton the least doubt that he was aware of the presence of eleven of the slaves on board.

6. The owner of five of the slaves, a passenger named Sultan-bin-Harib, gave evidence that the owner's agent at Jeddah (Hassam-bin-Ali) was cognizant of the fact that slaves were on board, and actually gave a slave boy for his master's son into Sultan-bin-Harib's charge.

7. The system of issuing tickets by the agents of British vessels at Jeddah without any name being inserted thereon, and the absence of passenger lists, no doubt render it extremely difficult for the masters of ships to ascertain whether any of their passengers are slaves; and as it is one which cannot but place the gravest obstacles in our way in the suppression of the Slave Trade, I am confident that it only needs to be represented in the proper quarter to insure some such measures being taken as are proposed by Commander Clayton in paragraph 4 of his letter of the 21st March, by which the anomalous and discreditable system of shipping hadjis in British vessels at Jeddah may be discontinued in the future.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. J. MACDONALD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Commander Clayton to Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald.

(Extract.)

"Rifleman," Bunder Abbas, March 17, 1877.

I BEG to report that on the 13th March at Bushire I received a communication from Her Majesty's Resident that he had been informed that there were some slaves among the Hadjis returning from Jeddah in the British steamer "Rokeby" arrived that morning.

I sent an officer on board at once, and, after some search, he found one male and four female slaves, mostly Abyssinian. The master of the steamer afterwards found that two other females on board were slaves. A male slave was also taken to the Residency, having been landed that morning.

I proceeded on board myself and made a strict inquiry, examining the master and crew, but there was not the slightest evidence that they were aware these persons were slaves; they had passage tickets, and in appearance differed little from other negroes on board who were Hadjis, with the exception of one little boy, who was found hidden in a box, and might very possibly have been brought on board in the same way.

In all six female and two male slaves were released and handed over to the Resident, who will forward them to Kurrachee or Bombay.

The owners (who are Turkish subjects) have been handed over to their Consul, who will forward them to Bussorah. One (a Persian) will I hope be punished by his own authorities at Bushire.

I beg to bring to your notice in another letter the utter want of system in taking pilgrims from Jeddah, making the smuggling of a few slaves a tolerably easy matter.

The steamer is the "Rokeby," of West Hartlepool, of 734 tons register, owned by George Pyman. Senior master's name, Richard Robinson Summerson.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

Commander Clayton to Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald.

Sir,

"Rifleman," Muscat, March 21, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to report that, on the arrival of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman" at Muscat, I found the British steamer "Koina" at anchor, having a large number of Hadjis on board returning from Jeddah.

2. I sent Lieutenant Percy Hoskin on board to search the ship. On his return he reported having found fourteen slaves. I then went on board myself and investigated the cases. One being doubtful was released immediately. In another, eleven slaves (four male and seven female) were found together in a large cabin under the fore-castle, and two others in different parts of the ship.

3. Of those found in the large cabin five belonged to a passenger named Sultan-bin-Harib, five others were merely under his charge, and the eleventh one he said belonged to another passenger, who, on being examined, denied it.

4. I then examined the master of the steamer, who denied all knowledge of these slaves being on board ; they certainly had passenger tickets, but this man has been ten years in this trade, and must have been well aware that one passage ticket marked for one man and six boys was almost certain to be for slave boys, and further, to show the careless way these people are taken on board, two slave girls came on board instead of two boys, and no notice was taken of the fact.

5. I greatly regret that I could not produce sufficient evidence to bring the ship into court, but in this case had I failed in getting the ship condemned it would have occasioned an increase of this trade.

6. The slaves were all brought before the Consular Court with Slave Trade jurisdiction at Muscat, and twelve were condemned and are now on board Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman;" one was released as the proof was very doubtful.

7. During the examination of Sultan-bin-Harib he stated that one of the slave boys who he was bringing for others was for Mahomet-bin-Kalifah (the son of the owner of the ship) ; all letters for the owner were examined, and had I been able to procure further evidence of this, the ship would I think have been condemned.

8. The steamer is the "Koina" of Bombay, 704 tons register, owner Eysa-bin-Kalifah, master William Morrison. The owner usually resides at Bombay and is a British subject, owning two steamers "Koina" and "Mula."

The steamer will probably return to Bombay, but I do not think that criminal proceedings against the master would succeed with the very slight evidence procurable, but I have not the least doubt that he was well aware of the presence of the eleven slaves who were together in the cabin.

9. Sultan-bin-Harib in his evidence stated that the owner's agent, Hassin-bin-Ali, was well aware that he had these slaves, and that he actually gave the one for his master's son into his charge.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS S. CLAYTON.

Inclosure 4 in No. 1.

Cammander Clayton to Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald.

Sir,

"Rifleman," Muscat, March 21, 1877.

I BEG to bring to your notice the present system of shipping Hadjis at the Port of Jeddah in British vessels, by which means a large number of slaves appear to be imported to the Persian Gulf ports.

I have lately boarded two British steamers bound for Muscat, Linga, Bushire, and other ports with returning Hadjis ; from one steamer I removed eight and from the other thirteen slaves.

2. The passengers get passage tickets from the steamers' agents at Jeddah. They are issued without any names, and no passenger lists are furnished. This makes it almost impossible for the master of the ship to ascertain whether any of his passengers are slaves.

The agents, I believe, are perfectly aware of the fact. On examination of one of the slave-owners on steam-ship "Rokeby," he stated he had actually told the agents for that vessel that he had slaves on board, and he replied, "It was all right."

3. Again, on board the "Koina," one of the passengers stated that he informed the agent that he wanted tickets for his slaves. One ticket was given him for one man and six boys. The agent must have known that these boys were slaves. Had I been able to produce further evidence to prove this, probably the steamer would have been condemned.

4. I think the remedy for this state of things is to give the British Consul at Jeddah orders to insist on passage tickets being made out in the name of the person taking passage ; also that passenger lists be furnished to him, and then if officials from the Consulate muster the passengers just before sailing and search the ship for stowaways an effectual check would be put to this practice. Possibly this might have the effect of driving some of the trade to foreign vessels, but still that would be preferable to the discredit to the English flag which these proceedings bring.

5. The histories of the slaves are identical. Kidnapped in Abyssinia or the Galca Country, sold to Arabs on the coast, usually at Massowa, then conveyed across the Red Sea to Hodeidah (as Her Majesty's ships are forbidden to examine vessels in the Red Sea we have no means of stopping this part of the trade). At Hodeidah, sold again to

regular slave merchants and sent to Jeddah for sale among the Hadjis. Most of these slaves are Abyssinians and Christians.

6. I would add that the Hadji ships bound to and from British Indian ports are obliged to have lists of passengers, and it certainly appears to be an oversight that British vessels to other ports are exempt.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS S. CLAYTON.

No. 2.

Consul-General Nixon to the Earl of Derby.—(Received May 8.)

(Extract.)

Bussorah, March 26, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your Lordship's perusal a copy of a letter from Nasser Pasha, the Governor-General of this Province, on the subject of the withdrawal of some slaves from the British steamer "Rokeby" at Bushire, while in transit from one Turkish port to another, and complaining of the hardship experienced by some of the women, who, although slaves, are also wives of Turkish subjects.

I also submit a copy of the letter I addressed to the Political Resident, Bushire, forwarding the request of Nasser Pasha that the slaves might be sent to Bussorah, in order that their case might be investigated.

I also addressed Captain Summerson, of the steamer "Rokeby," on the subject, as I was apprehensive that he might have taken passengers on board from some other ship after leaving Jeddah, which might have been carrying slaves, and now transmit his reply. I learnt from a conversation with him that all the passengers were shipped at Jeddah, that he sent a number of tickets on shore to the ship's agent; and, as the passengers presented their tickets at the gangway, they were permitted to come on board.

I would venture to advocate that some proclamation or notice be issued at the ports in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, in order that the people in the Ottoman dominions may be made aware that if their domestic slaves accompany them to sea that they are liable to seizure. At present they are all ignorant of this fact, and pilgrims leave Bussorah for Jeddah, accompanied by their slaves in large numbers every year. Indeed, from what I can learn, it appears to me that nearly every mail-steamer that leaves the port of Bussorah has slaves on board, so engrained is the institution of domestic slavery in the institutions of this Mahomedan country.

Our cruisers have done a great deal to check the importation of slaves into Turkey, and traffic has ceased at Bagdad, which was formerly a mart for the sale of slaves. The action of our Government in checking the importation has also materially enhanced the price of slaves, so that it is only the very wealthy that can afford to have them, and then they are called "khan azad," or children of the house, and treated as such. They are permitted to marry, and receive dowries when they do so, and five years' service entitles them to claim freedom.

If a master ill-treats a slave or beats him, the Turkish law, provided the slave be a Mahomedan, cannot compel him to return to his master, all Mahomedans being supposed to be equal by the law. The Mahomedans consider the institution of slavery to be one of mutual benefit, and the slaves are generally the best dressed and best fed members of the household.

I was much struck last year when, at Gurnah, the guard was turned out to receive me commanded by a negro, the soldiers being Mahomedans from different parts of the country. This places the matter in quite a different aspect, and shows that the slaves of Turkey have certain rights of citizenship, and are not regarded as mere chattels.

It is very difficult to make any Mahomedan consider that slavery is a crime. He usually contends that the negro is rescued from barbarism, and is taught the Mahomedan religion, and on that ground he defends the system; and, indeed, he regards himself somewhat in the light of a missionary, and thinks he is extending his faith. The question is, therefore, beset with some difficulty.

The case is under investigation by the Political Agent, Bushire, but I think it right to transmit copies of the correspondence that has passed here.

Inclosure 1 in No. 2.

*Consul-General Nixon to Lieutenant-Colonel Prideaux.**Bussorah, March 22, 1877.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit a copy of a letter from the Vice-Consul at Bussorah giving cover to a letter from Nassir Pasha, Governor-General of the Province, requesting that the slaves withdrawn from the steamer "Rokeby," at Bushire, may be brought to Bussorah, in order that their liability to seizure may be investigated.

The Governor-General represented to me verbally that the slaves in question were being brought from one Turkish port to another, and that these people are hereditary domestic slaves born in Ottoman territory, and that the matter is one of peculiar hardship, inasmuch as that some of them are enceinte.

Our laws regarding slaves are imperfectly known amongst the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and the possession of slaves is a legal institution, and his Excellency urged that as the slaves were not being brought from Africa for sale it was an infringement of law to seize them. It was also urged that it was the custom of the country from time immemorial for the Turks to purchase slave girls as wives, and that they were governed by the same laws as the free men in the country, and that every slave on becoming a Mahomedan was equal in the eye of the law, and that their service was not, by the rules in force in the Ottoman dominions, compulsory; for these reasons Nassir Pasha solicited that the slaves might be sent to Bussorah for the investigation of the matter. I would solicit the favour of your communicating with Government on the subject, and informing me of their views on this application.

It appears that these people were pilgrims returning from Jeddah; if a Proclamation were issued that Turkish slaves found on the high seas were liable to seizure, the matter would be understood by the Turks, at present they do not comprehend it.

Heinous as slavery may be considered, I deprecate the interference of our cruisers in cases like this, as the effect will be to drive pilgrims to the shrines by the overland route to Jeddah, and the sufferings of these domestic slaves will be greatly aggravated, many will die, and their deaths will be attributed to our want of discrimination by the Mahomedan nation with whom we are in alliance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. P. NIXON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 2.

Vice-Consul Robertson to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir,

Bussorah, March 22, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for your consideration, translation of a letter from his Excellency Nassir Pasha, wherein he requests that the slaves withdrawn from the steamer "Rokeby" at Bushire may be brought to Bussorah, in order that their liability to seizure may be investigated in the presence of all concerned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. J. C. ROBERTSON.

Nassir Pasha to Vice-Consul Robertson.

(Translation.)

(After compliments.)

Busrah, 6th Rubeel-Awul, 1294 (March 21, 1877.)

According to the petition submitted by Hajee Khullil, Hajee Mahomed, Abd-el Hussein and another person, their friend, this year when they determined to make the pilgrimage to the House of God, they took with them their slave girls, and some others, born in Ottoman territory at Mecca, they took in marriage according to Moslem custom, and some of them are with child, when they returned from Mecca they embarked in the vessel "Rokeby," and when they arrived at Bushire your Resident there took from them the said slave girls and slaves. As the petitioners were strangers and knew no one there, they did not stay at Bushire. The slave girls which they were bringing were not from Africa, but from Ottoman territory, and were proceeding from one Turkish place to another, and as there is a Consular Representative here, they pray that their slaves may be brought to this place, in order that their claim may be investigated in a

rightful manner. It appears from their representations that their claim is just. Marriage and espousal are in conformity with Moslem custom, and it is necessary that justice be done.

Inclosure 3 in No. 2.

Mr. Summerson to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir, *Steam-ship "Rokeby," Bussorah, March 23, 1877.*
 ACCORDING to your request, I beg to hand you the particulars of my last voyage. The pilgrims or passengers were all shipped at Jeddah on the 26th and 27th ultimo in the usual way, that is, in shore boats, none of which boats appeared sea-going craft and nothing suspicious about them; neither had the pilgrims, who all produced their tickets to an officer in passing the gangway.

They were landed as follows: 33 at Muscat on the 9th; 48 at Singa on the 11th; 202 at Bushire on the 13th instant. Up to this nothing transpired to lead me to think there were slaves on board; whilst I was on shore I heard the report and hastened to the Residency and found it correct; my ship was searched by an officer of Her Majesty's navy, who found four girls and one small boy.

I afterwards found other two girls, all of which Her Majesty's Resident proved were slaves and took from the owners. I may here remark the females were not put out of sight at sea, and my opinion, if asked at the time, would be, they were either the wives, sisters, or daughters of the people said to be their owners, so great was the respect they paid them.

I remain, &c.
 (Signed) R. R. SUMMERSON,
Master, Steam-ship "Rokeby," of Hartlepool.

P.S.—Seventy-five were landed here on the 15th instant, making a total of 358.

R. R. S.

No. 3.

Consul-General Nixon to the Earl of Derby.—(Received May 12.)

My Lord, *Bussorah, April 2, 1877.*
 WITH reference to my letter dated the 22nd ultimo, I have now the honour to submit the reply of the Political Resident, Bushire, to my letter conveying a copy of his Excellency Nassir Pasha's despatch requesting that the slave girls taken out of the steamer "Rokeby" might be sent to Bussorah, in order that their cases might be investigated.

It appears that the East African Court held at Muscat have condemned the slaves, and therefore they cannot be sent to Bussorah. I have acquainted his Excellency Nassir Pasha with the purport of the despatch of the Political Resident, Bushire.

I have, &c.
 (Signed) J. P. NIXON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 3.

Lieutenant-Colonel Prideaux to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir, *British Residency, Bushire, March 28, 1877.*
 I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 22nd March, 1877, and to state that I have forwarded it, with its accompaniments, for the consideration of his Excellency the Governor-General in Council.

2. With reference to his Excellency Nassir Pasha's request that the slaves removed from the steam-ship "Rokeby" may be sent to Busreh, in order that their liability to seizure may be investigated, I beg to state that I have received a telegram from Captain Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," informing me that the slaves in question have been condemned in the East African Court at Muscat; I am, therefore, unable to part with the slaves without the sanction of higher authority.

3. I may, however, add that Nassir Pasha appears to have been misinformed with regard to the position of these slaves. Of the six female slaves who were handed over to my charge by Captain Clayton, one was suffering from chronic dysentery, and has subsequently died. Of the remainder, three were mere children, and had not attained the age of puberty. The fifth had been bought by a Turkish subject at Jeddah, and was being sent by him to another Turkish subject at Busreh, in charge of one of the passengers, who handed me a letter stating that she had been purchased for 120 dollars, and recommending that if on arrival she was found too childish and ignorant, she should be placed for some days with another female slave to be disciplined. I was unable to discover the owner of the sixth girl, one man who was pointed out by the other passengers as occupying that position strongly denying the charge. It was perfectly clear that the girls, who were unacquainted with any language spoken in these parts, were not hereditary domestic slaves; and as to the statement that they were *enceinte*, the apothecary in charge of the Residency has certified that there were no external appearances of their being in that condition, although he could not state so positively, as they would not submit to a medical examination. Even if this were a fact, however, it would prove little, as the Galla and Abyssinian girls are often compelled to gratify the lust of the dealers while undergoing the long journey from their own country to the ports of exportation.

4. In the present state of the case, I apprehend that the only course for the alleged owners of the slaves to pursue is to appeal to the High Court of Admiralty in England against the Decree of the Court at Muscat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. F. PRIDEAUX.

Inclosure 2 in No. 3.

Consul-General Nixon to Vice-Consul Robertson.

Sir,

Bussorah, April 2, 1877.

WITH reference to your letter dated 22nd ultimo, I have the honour to inclose copy of a letter dated 28th idem from Lieutenant-Colonel W. F. Prideaux, Officiating Political Resident, Persian Gulf, in reply to my letter of 22nd March regarding the removal of slaves at Bushire from the steamer "Rokeyby," and request you will communicate the purport thereof to his Excellency Nassir Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. P. NIXON.

No. 4.

Consul-General Nixon to the Earl of Derby.—(Received May 26.)

My Lord,

Bussorah, April 6, 1877.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with my letter dated the 2nd instant, I have the honour to submit, for your Lordship's perusal, a copy of a letter from Mr. Morrison, master of the steamer "Koina," reporting that Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman" took out of his vessel twelve passengers, who were reported to be slaves.

Mr. Morrison's letter tends to show that some notice should be issued to the Turkish authorities that all slaves, domestic or otherwise, found on the high seas are liable to seizure.

The "Koina" is owned by a native firm at Lingah, in the Persian Gulf, and flies an English flag.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. P. NIXON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 4.

Consul-General Nixon to Captain Morrison.

Sir,

Bussorah, April 5, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that it has been brought to my notice that some slaves were taken out of your ship by Her Majesty's gunboat "Rifleman," and I solicit

the favour of your informing me of the number of slaves so taken, and the port where they were shipped, and if they were males or females. I also request you will state for what port they were bound, and any other information you can give.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. P. NIXON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 4.

Captain Morrison to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir,

Bussorah, April 5, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to inform you, in answer to your letter dated 5th instant, with regard to slaves found on board the steam-ship "Koina," that I took them on board at Jedda as passengers, and they presented passengers' tickets to me, therefore I cannot say they were slaves, but on my arrival at Muscat I was boarded by Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," who found twelve passengers on board who he called slaves, although I received them as passengers.

I have been ten years in this trade carrying cargo and pilgrims, but never before knew that I was conveying slaves; had I known that such were on board I should immediately have gone on board the gunboat and reported the same to the commanding officer.

I am unable to inform you where the said passengers or so-called slaves were for, as the Political Agent at Muscat retained their tickets.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WM. MORRISON, *Master, Steam-ship "Koina."*

No. 5.

Sir J. Pauncefote to Consul Beyts.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 4, 1877.

I AM directed by the Earl of Derby to transmit to you, for your information, copies and extracts of reports, as marked in the margin, from Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald and Commander Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," and from Her Majesty's Agents at Baghdad and at Bushire, relative to the seizure at Bushire and Muscat, respectively, of slaves on board the British vessels "Rokeby" and "Koina," who had been shipped on board those vessels at Jeddah.*

You will perceive that the Turkish Governor of Bussorah has remonstrated against the seizure of these slaves, alleging that they were the wives and servants of Turkish subjects accompanying their husbands and masters on the pilgrimage to Mecca, but the investigations which have taken place at the British Residency at Bushire leave little room for doubting that they were slaves newly purchased at Jeddah or Mecca, who were being illegally conveyed on board British vessels, and were therefore properly seized and detained by the Commander of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman."

I am to desire that you will report to his Lordship whether slaves other than domestic slaves accompanying their masters are in the habit of being shipped, as passengers or otherwise, on board British vessels, and, if so, whether with the knowledge and consent of the agents and masters of the vessels, and whether you as Her Majesty's Consul are in a position to know when slaves are embarked or have any facilities afforded you by the Turkish authorities for preventing the transport of slaves on board British ships.

I am, &c.
(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 6.

Sir J. Pauncefote to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 5, 1877.

I AM directed by the Earl of Derby to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches of the 26th March and 2nd ultimo, with their inclosures, relative to the slave girls

* Inclosures 1, 2, 3, and 4 in No. 1, and Nos. 2 and 3.

taken out of the British steamer "Rokeby;" and with reference to the suggestion contained in the former of these despatches, that a Proclamation should be issued at the ports in the Red Sea to the effect that domestic slaves accompanying their masters are liable to seizure, I am to state that it is not desirable to interfere with domestic slaves accompanying their masters while travelling in British ships, or employed in the navigation of the vessel unless they are detained on board against their will, and therefore that it would be inexpedient to issue any notice in the sense proposed.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 7.

Sir J. Pauncefote to Consul-General Nixon.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 5, 1877.

I AM directed by the Earl of Derby to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 6th ultimo, inclosing a copy of a letter from the master of the "Koina," relating to the slaves who were taken out of that vessel by Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman."

With regard to your suggestion that some notice should be issued to the Turkish authorities that all slaves, domestic or otherwise, found on the high seas, are liable to seizure, I am to refer you to my previous despatch of this day.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 8.

The Earl of Derby to Mr. Layard.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 8, 1877.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch addressed to the Admiralty by Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald, the Commander-in-chief on the East India station, together with copies of its inclosures from Commander Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship "Rifleman," relative to the seizure of slaves shipped at Jeddah on board the British steamers "Rokeby" and "Koina."*

It is unsatisfactory that British vessels and British subjects should be mixed up in Slave Trading transactions, but until Her Majesty's Consuls have the right to overhaul British vessels in the ports where pilgrims are in the habit of embarking, it will be impossible to put a stop to the state of things reported by the commander of the "Rifleman."

Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah has, on more than one occasion, pointed out that it is impossible for him either to control the number of passengers shipped on board British vessels, or to see that no slaves are taken on board, unless he is allowed to verify the list of passengers, and is afforded facilities for doing so by the local authorities.

The Turkish authorities, however, strenuously oppose any such facilities being afforded him, and have denounced as an impertinent interference with their duties the attempt on the part of the Consul to limit the number of passengers, or to enquire too strictly into their character.

All the Turkish local authorities would seem to oppose most strenuously any attempts to alter the system in forec, and the attempt made by the British Consular Officers to do away with these irregularities appears to have brought down on them the hostility of all the authorities in Jeddah.

I have to request your Excellency to address strong representations to the Turkish Government with a view to obtain for British Consular Agents the facilities necessary for them to put an effectual check to the shipment of slaves as passengers on board British steamers.

I am, &c.

(Signed) DERBY.

* Inclosures in No. 1.

No. 9.

Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald to the Secretary to the Admiralty.—(Received at the Foreign Office, June 25.)

(Extract.)

“Undaunted,” at Bombay, May 28, 1877.

IN my letter of the 1st April, I had the honour to draw their Lordships' attention to the fact that slaves had lately been carried by steamers under British colours in the Persian Gulf, and for the sake of completeness, I will now briefly summarise the particulars contained in my report above quoted.

On March 13, 1877, the steamer “Rokeby,” of West Hartlepool, 734 tons register, was searched by Commander Clayton, and six female and two male slaves were released and handed over to the Resident, to be by him forwarded to Kurrachee or Bombay. The owners (Turkish subjects with one exception) were handed over to their Consul to be sent to Bussorah, and the case of a Persian owner would probably be dealt with at Bushire.

As it was impossible to prove wilful receipt of slaves on board, there being not the slightest evidence that the master and crew were aware that the persons above enumerated were slaves, the vessel was released after further inquiry at the Residency.

The steamer “Koina,” of Bombay, 704 tons register, owner Eysa-bin-Kalifah, was searched at Muscat on the 20th March, and twelve slaves were taken therefrom and condemned in the Consular Court with Slave Trade jurisdiction at that Court.

In this case the master of the steamer (William Morrison) denied all knowledge of slaves being on board his vessel, but Commander Clayton is of opinion that from the fact of the master of the “Koina” having been ten years in the Persian Gulf Trade, he must have been well aware that one passage ticket marked for one man and six boys was almost certain to be for slave boys; nor had Commander Clayton the least doubt that he was aware of the presence of eleven of the slaves on board.

The owner of five of the slaves—a passenger named Sultan-bin-Harib—gave evidence that the owner's agent at Jeddah (Hassam-bin-Ali) was cognizant of the fact that slaves were on board, and actually gave a slave boy for his master's son into Sultan-bin-Harib's charge.

The system of issuing tickets by the agents of British vessels at Jeddah without any name being inserted thereon, and the absence of passenger-lists, no doubt render it extremely difficult for the masters of ships to ascertain whether any of their passengers are slaves, and as it is one which cannot but place the gravest obstacles in our way in the suppression of the Slave Trade, I am confident that it only needs to be represented in the proper quarter to insure some such measures being taken as are proposed by Commander Clayton in paragraph 4 of his letter of the 21st March, by which the present anomalous and discreditable system of shipping Hadjis in British vessels at Jeddah may be discontinued in the future.

No. 10.

Consul Beyts to the Earl of Derby.—(Received July 2.)

My Lord,

Suez, June 20, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of Foreign Office despatch of the 4th instant, with inclosures, being copies and extracts of reports from Vice-Admiral Sir R. Macdonald and Commander Clayton, of Her Majesty's ship “Rifleman,” and from Her Majesty's Agents at Baghdad and at Bushire, relative to the seizure at Bushire and Muscat respectively of slaves on board the British vessels “Rokeby” and “Koina,” who had been shipped on board these vessels at Jeddah.

I have the honour to state that I have given these documents careful perusal, and consideration, but, as the cases referred to occurred during my temporary absence from Jeddah, when Mr. Wylde, the Vice-Consul, was in charge of the Consulate, that officer, on learning from the master of the “Koina,” who had lately returned to Jeddah, the circumstances of the case, immediately wrote a despatch of his explanation in anticipation of an inquiry from the Foreign Office, which I now submit as an inclosure, the explanations in which, having been extended to great length, I refrain from adding to them, but concur in most of the opinions advanced by Mr. Wylde.

I am not in a position to state positively that the agent was cognizant of the fact

that he was (as stated) issuing passage tickets for slaves to be embarked on board the "Rokeby;" nevertheless, acquainted as I am with the Arab character, I look upon the statements made by the owners of the slaves to be untrustworthy and such as could not be entertained as sufficient proofs of the agent's culpability. I am rather disposed to the belief that the owners of the slaves have made these statements to screen themselves.

In reply to the last paragraph of your Lordship's despatch requiring me to report whether slaves accompanying their masters are in the habit of being shipped as passengers or otherwise on board of British vessels, and if so, whether with the knowledge and consent of the agents and masters of the vessels, and whether I, as Her Majesty's Consul, am in a position to know when slaves are embarked, or have any facilities afforded me by the Turkish authorities, for preventing the transport of slaves on board British ships, I have the honour to state that I do believe that slaves are not unfrequently shipped from Jeddah as domestic servants, relatives, and even as the wives and daughters of their owners; and that the masters and agents of British vessels, however desirous they may be to detect such frauds, are in reality unable to do so; nor am I, as Her Majesty's Consul, in a position to know for a certainty when such cases occur, for the detection of which no facilities whatever are afforded by, or could be expected at the hands of the Turkish authorities at Jeddah.

On the other hand, it is certain that any difficulty that might be raised by either masters or agents on the grounds of such suspected traffic between two Turkish ports, would as effectually hamper their traffic and prevent them from obtaining freight,—as well as the practice, if persisted in, of boarding British vessels and opening private correspondence, for the purpose of proving that some of the passengers on board are looked upon as personal property by the local authorities at port of shipment as well as port of destination.

So long, therefore, my Lord, as the Turkish authorities take no stringent measures to put a stop to the practice of slave owners, it will be impossible to carry passengers from Jeddah without running the risk of becoming the unwilling means of facilitating the Slave Traffic.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BEYTS.

Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

Vice-Consul Wylde to the Earl of Derby.

(Extract.)

Jeddah, May 29, 1877.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, on the return of the British Steam-ship "Koina" from the Persian Gulf, I was informed by her commander, Captain Morrison, that his vessel was detained at Muscat by Her Majesty's ship "Rifeman," and that slaves that were on board were taken away from his ship. I was also informed by the same person that the British steamer "Rokeby" was also detained, and that slaves were seized on board of her as well, and that the private letters that these steamers carried were opened and the correspondence read by the Commander of the "Rifeman."

These steamers having left Jeddah while I was in charge of the Consulate, I shall doubtless be asked for an explanation, and I now beg to acquaint your Lordship with the circumstances attending the shipment of domestic and other slaves on board of British and foreign steamers, and the position of domestic slaves with regard to their masters.

Within the last two months a Proclamation was read at Mecca and Hodeidah, forbidding the traffic in slaves, and for reasons best known to the Turkish Government, this Proclamation was not read at Jeddah, the only place where there is a representative of Her Majesty. Their reasons are obvious: the authorities, fearing a disturbance should slaves appear in any numbers at this Consulate, and their utter inability to help us should a disturbance break out, the members of the Government, Medjliss, and every Arab householder in Jeddah, owning slaves, should a question arise regarding domestic or harem life, serious complications might arise, and the members of the Government that would have to decide the case would hardly give justice, being in an analogous position with those that they had to give judgment on.

The majority of the inhabitants of the Hedjaz and Yemen, from the highest to the lowest, are interested in the Slave Trade, domestic slaves being a matter of necessity, servants not being procurable, what few there are being bad. In most of the families there are female slaves that have borne children either by the master of the house or by

his sons. According to Mahomedan law both the mother and the children become free ; however, this is not carried out in Jeddah, and occasionally the female and her offspring are sold.

Should I have a case brought before me like the latter I mention, and have to correspond with the Government Medjliss regarding it, I should have but a poor chance of proving my case; and to interfere with their domestic arrangements, which are countenanced by religion, is a dangerous matter.

The order from Constantinople forbidding the traffic in slaves defines somewhat better the position of this Consulate towards the traffic, and we may expect more assistance, especially in matters regarding the shipment of slaves by dealers from here and their importation. However, domestic slavery having been an institution for so many generations, and all being implicated in it, there is no chance of any orders from Constantinople being carried out strictly, and I look upon being able to put an end to domestic slaves being shipped during the pilgrimage, and at other times, as a matter of impossibility.

One of the chief sources of the Jeddah traffic is the pilgrimage, and it may be said that the annual gathering at Mecca gives the principal impetus to the present Slave Trade of the world. The wealthy pilgrims coming on Hadj purchase slaves and take them away with them to their countries as wives or servants, as the case may be.

Sometimes batches of slaves are bought by dealers, and these are generally taken away north for the Mediterranean ports, and there is never a year passes without several hundreds leaving here and Yembo during the pilgrim season; however, by far the largest number leave as I have before mentioned with rich pilgrims for entirely domestic purposes.

I have no particulars of the inquiries instituted regarding the seizure and detention of the British steamers "Rokeby" and "Koina," so cannot pass an opinion whether the slaves on board were shipped by a slave dealer for sale, or were the property of the native passengers, and therefore *bonâ fide* domestic servants.

To prevent if possible a repetition of the occurrence, I have issued a circular to British ship-masters leaving here for the Persian Gulf, of which I beg to inclose your Lordship a copy. I have requested ship-masters to abstain from interfering in the matter, and report at once to this Consulate should they suspect any of the passengers on board having slaves. My reason for doing so is that female Mahomedans coming on board are always veiled, and the slaves both male and female that accompany them are invariably with the harem, and I do not consider British ship-masters, as a rule, capable of determining whether their passengers are slaves or not; at least it would be authorizing them to make inquiries among their passengers both male and female on a most delicate subject, and unless such inquiries were carried out with considerable tact, it would certainly lead to disputes which would bring trouble and responsibility on the commanders of vessels.

I do not consider the masters of the steamers "Rokeby" and "Koina" to blame for leaving this port till they had ascertained that they had no slaves on board their vessels.

Captain Morrison told me that had he known he had any on board he would have reported the fact at the first port where there was a British representative; an extenuating point in their favour also is that it is nearly a matter of impossibility for them to inspect all their passengers when they arrive on board, and when so many nationalities are represented it takes some little experience of Eastern people to know what nation they belong to, who are slaves, and who not. Certainly but few of the commanders that trade out here could determine, and it often takes place that these men have never been in the trade before. The stricter the discipline on board the steamers, the easier it becomes to detect the slaves on board, but as canal steamers belonging to private owners are not always noted for their discipline, it might and does happen, that slaves are unintentionally carried away from here.

It has been reported before from this Consulate that slaves in large numbers leave for the Mediterranean in steamers carrying the foreign flag.

The Turkish vessels that are here during the pilgrim season invariably carry slaves so also do the Austrian Lloyds vessels.

The slaves that were on board the "Koina," were furnished with tickets the same as the other passengers, and it is the rule when slaves leave this port that they are furnished with tickets, and come on board as *bonâ fide* passengers. The "Koina's" agent at this port is a native.

The supplies of slaves for the Persian Gulf, I am informed, are drawn from Mecca by the caravan route through Nejd, and a great number of slaves are also sent to Syria

by the Damascus caravan route; showing that the Persian Gulf Slave Trade by sea being put an end to, the demand is supplied by land.

Slavery in all forms of domestic service is so necessary for the Arabs, that it will never die a natural death in the country; to put matters on a more satisfactory footing, the importation must be put a stop to, the laws as regards slaves will then be carried out more strictly, and the occasional acts of cruelty that take place will become rarer, as to replace a slave will not be such an easy task, their value will be enhanced, and the more valuable this description of property becomes, the more the likelihood there is of its being taken care of. The Mahommedans, as a rule, do not look upon the actual stealing of people for slaves with favour; they think, however, that once a slave is brought to a Mohammedan country he becomes a Mussulman, has a religion, and believes in God, and therefore is better off than if he remained in his own country as a heathen and an outcast.

I consider, my Lord, that the detention of the "Rokeby" and "Koina," and the seizure of the slaves on board, raises a question which will want great attention on the part of the Government if the principle of stopping all British steamers bound from the Hedjaz and Yemen ports for the Persian Gulf, after passing the Straits of Perim, is to be continued, for two reasons, firstly, that the carrying trade from Jeddah and Hodeidah is mostly done by British vessels, and the merchants here, seeing that the vessels under the British flag are liable to be detained on the chance of their carrying slaves, will tend to drive the trade in cargo and passengers from our flag, and the natives also do not give us credit for disinterested motives when their letters are opened, as they cannot understand that they are opened merely on account of the Slave Trade. The second and the more important of the two reasons is that they consider and look up to the British nation as an example of justice. To separate master from wife or servant when the Mahommedan religion justifies the purchase of slaves for wives or servants, and preventing them from keeping what is their rightful property, separating persons that have been married according to Mahommedan law, or boys that have been bought and have a chance of filling posts of trust, as many slaves do, hardly tends to bear out our reputation for justice. The Arabs of the Hedjaz and Yemen are also well aware that Her Majesty numbers among her subjects many millions of Mahommedans, who are contented and happy under her rule, and enjoy full religious privileges.

The evil of the Slave Trade is not in the Hedjaz or Yemen, although these places are partly the cause of the trade. The life of the slave, commencing from entering Arabia, is nearly devoid of hardship. Cruelty by the master to the servant is nearly unknown, and considering the enormous number of slaves, crime and cruelty compare favourably with the list of offences against law in the most civilized countries.

The slave in Arabia is not looked upon as a beast of burden, he is well treated and well fed. Many of the merchants of Jeddah and Mecca were originally slaves. They fill posts of trust and their origin is no cause of reproach. I am convinced, and from discussions that I have had with many of the leading Mahommedans here, that the majority are indifferent whether the Traffic is carried on or not as regards Africa—the depôt of the world—but to interfere with slavery as recognized by their religion in their Holy Land, to prevent domestic slaves being shipped with their masters while travelling, will only tend to alienate the present good feeling existing between Arabia and the English nation, and will not put a stop to the Trade, which can only be put an end to by preventing the importation.

Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

Circular.—Slave Trade.

HER Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul begs to draw the attention of ship-masters visiting this port to the risk that they incur of detention and seizure by Her Majesty's cruisers if they allow slaves to be carried on board their vessels.

Should a ship-master find out before leaving this port that he has slaves or suspected slaves on board, it will be his duty to communicate the fact at once to Her Majesty's Representative here.

In the case of slaves being found on board after proceeding to sea, the best method to adopt will be to make an entry in the official log, and on arrival at the first British port or foreign port where there is one of Her Majesty's representatives to communicate with the authorities, who will take the necessary steps in the matter.

It is, however, earnestly requested that ship-masters should not refuse permission on board to passengers with slaves or suspected slaves.

If any suspicious cases are brought to their notice, to abstain from interfering and to report at once to Her Majesty's Representative on shore, whose duty it will be to render any assistance in the matter.

(Signed) A. B. WYLDE,
Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul.

Jeddah, May 6, 1877.
To British Ship-masters, Jeddah.

No. 11.

Mr. Layard to the Earl of Derby.—(Received July 7.)

My Lord,

Therapia, June 25, 1877.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 8th instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of a note which, in pursuance of your Lordship's instructions, I have addressed to Safvet Pasha, making strong representations on the subject of the conduct of the Turkish authorities at Jeddah, and other parts of the Red Sea, in throwing difficulties in the way of British Consular Officers, to prevent them controlling the number of passengers on board British vessels, and ascertaining their characters with a view to checking Slave Trade transactions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Mr. Layard to Safvet Pasha.

Sir,

Therapia, June 25, 1877.

THE serious abuses committed in the Turkish ports of the Red Sea, and especially at Jeddah, in the shipment of slaves on board of British vessels, have frequently been brought to the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and representations on the subject have before been made to the Porte by Her Majesty's Embassy.

Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, whose duty it is to prevent British vessels and British subjects from mixing themselves up in slave-trading transactions, is prevented from discharging it, as he is unable, in consequence of the interference of the Turkish authorities, to control the number of passengers shipped on British vessels, or to see that no slaves are taken on board them. It is necessary that he should be allowed to verify the list of passengers, and that he should be afforded facilities by the local authorities for doing so. Those facilities have, however, been hitherto denied him, and every difficulty has been thrown in the way of the attempt that he has properly made to limit the number of passengers on board British vessels, and to inquire into their character. In consequence of this opposition on the part of the local authorities, and especially of the hostility of those of Jeddah, the British Consular Officers have been unable to do away with the irregularities complained of.

I am instructed by Her Majesty's Government to address a strong representation to the Porte on this subject, and to make an urgent request that orders may be sent without delay to the authorities at Jeddah and at other Turkish ports in the Red Sea to afford British Consular Officers the facilities necessary for them to put an effectual check to the shipment of slaves as passengers on board British vessels.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 12.

Sir J. Pauncefote to Consul Beyts.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 16, 1877.

I HAVE laid before Lord Derby your despatch of the 30th ultimo, inclosing Mr. Vice-Consul Wyld's report relative to the slaves shipped on board the British vessels

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“Rokeby” and “Koina,” together with a copy of a notice which he had issued to British ship-masters for their guidance in case they should have reason to believe that slaves had been shipped on board their vessels.

I am to state to you that Lord Derby approves the terms of Mr. Wylde’s notice.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

No. 13.

*Sir J. Pauncefote to the Secretary to the Admiralty.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 16, 1877.

WITH reference to my letter of May 24, I am directed by the Earl of Derby to transmit to you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty’s Consul at Jeddah, inclosing a report from Mr. Vice-Consul Wylde in regard to the slaves shipped on board the British ships “Rokeby” and “Koina” at Jeddah.

I am to add that Lord Derby has approved the notice issued by Mr. Vice-Consul Wylde to British ship-masters.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

* A similar letter was sent to the India Office.

CORRESPONDENCE respecting the Seizure of Slaves
on board the "Rokeby" and "Koina," by Her
Majesty's ship "Rifeman."

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

LONDON:
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