
RESOLUTIONS of the Ottoman Porte, relative to the Abolition and Prevention of Slave Trade. January 29, 1857.

Ethem Pasha to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. (Translation.)

Constantinople, January 29, 1857.

I HAVE received the 2 notes dated the 6th and the 10th of December, 1856, addressed to me by your Excellency, respecting the Slave Trade. Your Lordship's observations on this subject are most just and appropriate, for these unfortunate black slaves, while on their passage from remote parts of Africa to the coast, are exposed to all sorts of hardships and privations in the desert. A number of them thus perish, while the remainder, being transported suddenly from a hot climate to a cold one, suffer mostly from complaints of the chest, and other ills, and die at an early age. These are evils the contemplation of which wrings the hearts of well thinking men, and causes them to apply themselves with all their might, to seek the means for their total suppression.

The Sublime Porte is, in short, desirous of giving effect, as soon as possible, to a praiseworthy deed, so much in harmony with

* Repealed by Warrant, September 11, 1856.

the dictates of humanity: indeed, as a preliminary to the acceptance of the principle of the abolition of negro slavery, the Sublime Porte had already, from time to time, addressed suitable instructions on this subject to some of the provinces; but, as these were found to be insufficient, the definitive resolution has been adopted of abolishing the negro Slave Trade altogether, and of severely punishing those acting contrary to this interdiction.

The definitive resolution adopted by His Imperial Majesty on this subject will naturally be communicated to the proper authorities. His Majesty's commands have been, therefore, sent to Egypt and Tripoli West to the following purport: that any black slaves arriving at the coast of Tripoli after the receipt of the imperial firman to be sent there, are peremptorily not to be allowed to be sent for sale in any direction, while, at the same time, the slave-traders in the province, and those scattered about in the remote interior of Africa, are to receive prompt notification of the total abolition of the trade. Slave-traders, however, in any remote places, shall be granted a term of 8 weeks, and should any black slaves arrive after the expiration of that period, they shall not be permitted to be sold within the province, and the slave-traders who brought them, shall be compelled to liberate them on the spot, and they shall be set free: as it would, however, imperil the lives of these unfortunate creatures to send them back to their own country, no measures shall be taken for that purpose; and as they would be equally reduced to destitution by being abandoned to their own resources, they shall be located in proper quarters and provided with food.

Although the taking away the slaves from the traders, in the first instance, after the expiration of the established period, is a sort of punishment in itself, a proportionate punishment shall be inflicted on a repetition of the offence; such offenders shall, therefore, be imprisoned during 1 year for the first offence, and an additional year's imprisonment shall be awarded for each repetition of such offence.

Imperial orders will likewise be addressed to all the authorities on the coasts and the islands of the Mediterranean, and any slaves arriving after the receipt of such orders, are not, on any account, to be allowed to be sent to another quarter: the slave-traders shall be obliged to set such slaves free; they shall be suitably located and provided with food. Imperial orders to the above purport shall be duly published; and as 6 weeks are sufficient for the promulgation in the Mediterranean of this prohibition, it shall be added that all vessels containing black slaves, arriving at the ports and "scalas," after the expiration of the above term, shall be confiscated to the State, the captain imprisoned, and a report of the circumstance made to the capital.

All captains of ships of war cruising in the Mediterranean are to preside constantly over the (execution of these orders), and they

shall take possession, on behalf of the State, of any vessels which they may fall in with carrying negro slaves, after the expiration of the aforesaid term, and send them to Constantinople, in conformity with the explicit instructions furnished to them.

Special orders have been addressed to the Governor-General of Bagdad, instructing him to grant a delay of 3 months for the Persian Gulf, owing to the distance of that sea; to promulgate the regulations established with regard to the negro slaves of Tripoli West and Egypt; and to send back to their country, by sea, any black slaves coming to that quarter, if it be easy to do so. Special orders have also been issued for putting the ships of war, lying at Bussorah, in proper condition: the vessels are to cruize in the proper directions, so as to watch over the entire abolition of the Slave Trade; any vessel taken with slaves is to be seized on behalf of the State, the captain imprisoned, and a report of the case to be sent to Constantinople.

Looking to the delicacy of this subject, as affecting the neighbourhood of the Hedjaz, it is necessarily exempted from this prohibition for the present. It will be impossible to compel those who, before the promulgation of this interdiction in the Imperial States, had, in pursuance of ancient custom purchased negro slaves, to liberate them. Henceforward, no more negro slaves will be imported, and it is not the custom to prolong the servitude of slaves throughout the term of their lives; it is well known that they are usually liberated, sometimes within 2 or 3 years, and, at the latest, after 8 or 10 years' service. This part of the subject is, therefore, transitory, and must be passed over in silence.

The delivery up to the arsenal at Bussorah of a vessel carrying slaves, and taken by an English cruizer, calls for the thanks and acknowledgments of the Sublime Porte. The Governor-General of Bagdad has been instructed to take possession of the said vessel on behalf of the State, and to hand it over to the captain of the English cruizer for conveying to their country the slaves found on board of her.

The captain of the "Messhaud," detained lately at Bengazi with slaves, as set forth in your Excellency's note dated the 10th January, having committed an act of inhumanity, instructions have been sent to the Governor-General of Tripoli for his punishment, as well as the punishment of those among the authorities who have acted in contravention of the Government orders, according to their faults, and for the immediate liberation of the slaves found on board that vessel, without reference to the period established, in consideration of the sufferings undergone by them.

With reference to the steam-vessel "Shadi," if it should be ascertained that she took negro slaves on board, the captain of her shall be duly punished.

Such, my lord, is the broad resolution newly adopted by the Sublime Porte, in all sincerity (of purpose), and the several

measures of detail consequent upon it, will, no doubt, be duly appreciated by her sincere ally the Government of Great Britain.

It is by His Imperial Majesty's commands that I now communicate them to your Excellency ; and I avail myself, &c.

* See Vol. 5, Pages 248.

‡ See Vol. 10, Page 320.

† See Vol. 8, Page 247.

§ See Vol. 10 (FRANCE); Page 136.

INSTRUCTIONS of the Ottoman Porte to the Authorities in Turkey and Egypt, relative to the Abolition and Prevention of Slave Trade. *January, 1857.**

(1.)—*Firman to the Pasha of Egypt.*

(Translation.)

January, 1857.

WHEREAS the beneficial effects of the measures adopted and proclaimed by my Government respecting the prohibition of Negro Slave Trade have not become apparent in some parts of my Imperial dominions, that trade being still in force; and whereas a great number of these slaves, during their journey from their own country to the coast, perish from the fatigues and hardship they are exposed to in the deserts, whilst the remainder, owing to their passage from warm to cold countries, become subject to pulmonary and other diseases, by which means most of them are cut off from the enjoyment of life at an early age: this distressing state of things has exceeded the limits of sufferance to an extent which humanity cannot sanction, and the prohibition of this trade, by means of an universal and continuous prevention, has become necessary.

After the arrival of my Imperial firman, no negro slaves shall be allowed to leave the province of Western Tripoli, which is the Mediterranean outlet, for any place whatever.

This matter shall be immediately announced to the slave-dealers in the province, as well as to such of them as may be dispersed in the interior of Africa. But a period of delay of 8 weeks shall be fixed for those of the latter who are in distant places.

Should, however, any negro slaves arrive after this period, permission shall not be given for their sale, even within the province, but the slave-dealers who shall have brought them, shall be compelled to liberate them.

But as sending the liberated slaves back to their country would be, in fact, to expose their lives to danger a second time, they shall be placed in suitable situations and families, and enabled to gain their living.

A period of 6 weeks being sufficient for the promulgation of this prohibition in the Mediterranean, any ship arriving at any port or scala after that period with slaves on board, such ship being a merchantman, subject to my Government, it shall be confiscated, its captain shall be imprisoned, and the occurrence shall be reported to Constantinople. The slaves that come by it shall be forcibly liberated by their owners, they being, as above, put in suitable situations, and enabled to gain their living.

The commanders of my ships of war cruising in the Mediter-

* See Resolutions, Page 1014.

ranean shall watch over and survey this matter without intermission; and, after the expiration of the above period, they shall receive positive instructions to seize and take possession of any ship they may meet carrying negro slaves, and send it to Constantinople.

Although it is natural that this liberation of slaves should only obtain in the case of those to be in future imported anywhere by slave-dealers, and that those who have previously become private property should remain in their original condition until it may please their masters to dispose otherwise, yet, as their purchase and sale by auction will not be permitted, it will be necessary to manage (the transaction) in some suitable manner, *i. e.*, in a way consonant with generosity. This matter, also, must be well and carefully explained to those whom it concerns.

This prohibition will be fully carried out in the Province of Irak (Bagdad).

A period of 3 months' delay will be fixed for the Persian Gulf; after that, appropriate vessels from among my men-of-war, belonging to the arsenal of Basra, will be sent to cruize about, and will confiscate such ships as they may meet with negro slaves on board, and report the matter here.

My Imperial orders to that effect will be sent to the Governors of Western Tripoli and Bagdad. The necessary orders will also be sent to the authorities of the islands and coasts of the Archipelago and Mediterranean.

Although this prohibition is at present in force in the country of Egypt, yet, as the present formal resolution is meant to signify an universal prohibition, when any negro slaves shall in future arrive there also, the above rules shall be fully carried out, both as regards themselves and their dealers.

My Imperial order to that effect shall be issued separately.

These matters having been discussed and agreed upon in my Privy and Cabinet Councils, they have been submitted to me, and my permission asked. My Imperial decree for their execution accordingly has been issued. My sovereign orders, in the same sense, have been proclaimed, and the official communications have been effected.

Therefore, you who are my Vizier aforesaid, on the arrival of this my Imperial firman, will proclaim the matter in due form, and, in accordance with the judgment, intelligence and zeal which characterizes you, you will take heed and exert yourself to prevent the departure of negro slaves, after the date of your proclamation, from any one of the places situated within your jurisdiction, for any other, and to ensure the entire enforcement of the above prohibition in the country of Egypt.

5 *Gemazil*, 1273.

Note. The same to the Pashas of Tripoli and Bagdad, with slight variation of words.

Vizirial letters to all, couched in the same words. The other Pashas are those of Salonica, Scodra, Izmid, Aleppo, Candia, Rhodes, Sidon, Adana, Cyprus, Dardanèlles, Jerusalem, Gallipoli, Rhodosto, Volo, Brussa, Cyzicus, Mytilene, Scio, Cos, Lemnos, Tenedos, Teke, and Kodjaili.
