

EGYPT.

No. 318.

Mr. Beardsley to Mr. Fish.

No. 364.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES,*Cairo, Egypt, September 29, 1875. (Received November 8.)*

SIR: The military movements on the frontiers of Abyssinia have of late excited considerable interest in Egypt, and have been the subject of comment in some of the European journals.

The permanent occupation of the province of Bogos by the Egyptian government three years ago, as reported in my dispatches numbered 9 and 19, of the 1st of August and the 16th of October, 1872, and the acquisition of Zeilah, on the Red Sea, in July last, as reported in my dispatch No. 337, of the 17th July, 1875, appears to have aroused Prince John, King of Abyssinia, to offensive operations, and to have awakened in him the same ambitious dream of territorial conquest which inspired King Theodore and contributed to his final destruction.

During the past summer Prince John has occupied himself in gathering his forces near the northern frontier of Abyssinia. Early in August he crossed the frontier of Abyssinia proper and entered the province of Hamasen. Hamasen was ruled by a petty prince, semi-independent, who, at the approach of King John, fled to Mossowah, and claimed the protection of the Egyptian government. A Swedish Christian mission, long established in the interior, also fled to Massowah for protection.

The King's forces pitched their camp at a distance of eight hours' march north of the Abyssinian frontier and sixteen hours march from Massowah, where at latest information they were still encamped. Their number is said to be 30,000, but a considerable part of their number is probably composed of camp-followers, a prominent feature of all Abyssinian and Central African armies. They are commanded by an Englishman of the name of Kirkham, who remained in Abyssinia after the departure of the English army. His official relations with the King of Abyssinia are mentioned in my dispatch No. 19, above referred to. The general object of this warlike expedition appears to be, aside from plunder, to reconquer the province of Hamasen, as well as Bogas, if possible, and to extend the frontier of Abyssinia to the sea.

At the approach of the Abyssinian forces the Egyptian frontier was defended by but a small contingent of men, and considerable apprehension was entertained for the safety of Massowah.

The military department of Massowah is under the command of Munsinger Pacha, who has lived in that neighborhood for many years. He is a Swiss, and filled the post at one time of English vice-consul at Massowah. Later he entered the Egyptian service, and for several years was governor of that province. Several battalions of troops have been sent from Suez to re-enforce Munsinger on the frontier, and an Egyptian frigate has been dispatched to Massowah.

Colonel Long, an American officer, and Colonel Arendruple, a Swede, have been sent to the scene of action to co-operate with Munsinger. Colonel Long left Suez about ten days ago with a contingent of troops and with sealed orders.

Munsinger has received orders to communicate with King John by letter, requesting him to withdraw immediately into his own territory.

In default of a favorable answer from the King, Munsinger is ordered to attack the Abyssinian forces at once and drive them beyond the southern borders of the province of Hamasen, but to proceed no further.

Advices from Massowah are now looked for with interest.

I am, &c.,

R. BEARDSLEY.

No. 319.

Mr. Beardsley to Mr. Fish.

No. 366.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES,

Cairo, Egypt, October 2, 1875. (Received November 8.)

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith inclosed a decree of his highness the Khedive relative to the new codes of laws which have been adopted for the use of the new judicial tribunals. By virtue of this decree the new codes will be applied in all the Egyptian tribunals on and after the 18th of the present month.

This application of the new codes in *all* the tribunals of Egypt, as well as in the new tribunals, is a fact worthy of attention, and marks an important step in advance in the judicial progress of this country. A fixed and determined code of laws has long been the great need of the East, and perhaps in no part of the East has that need been felt more than in Egypt, where the commercial spirit has been so wrongfully developed during the past half century, and where the relations between foreigners and natives are so constant and intimate.

The laws as administrated by the local courts are generally gleaned from imperfect and obsolete codes, from the dogmas of the Khoran, and from local customs and precedents.

It is not difficult to find a law, creed, or precedent for any desired decision, and he who resorts to the local courts for redress, trusting to even-handed justice for a vindication of his rights, is likely to emerge from court with anything but exalted ideas of oriental justice.

The system and the uncertainty of the laws is as much to blame as the dishonesty of the judicial authorities, and it is hoped that the adoption of the new codes may work a speedy and effectual change for the better.

Yours, &c.,

R. BEARDSLEY.

[Inclosure.]

Khedivial decree, addressed to the minister of justice the 16 Chaban 1292—September 16, 1875.

Considering that the progress of a country finds its most powerful stimulus in the codified and published laws; that the laws thus promulgated offer a serious guarantee to legitimate interests, assure the repression of culpable acts, and favor the general development and prosperity; considering that, inspired by the social wants of the period, by the sentiments which animate us to promote the general welfare and extend civilization, we have succeeded, by the grace of God, in establishing the laws which form the object of the following codes: The civil code, the commercial code, the maritime commercial code, civil and commercial code of procedure, penal code, and the code of criminal instruction.

We have sanctioned, and we hereby sanction, the said codes, which we declare executory in all the Egyptian territory, before all the tribunals and courts of justice, from the 18th of next October, and we repeal from that date all laws, ordinances, decrees which are in opposition to them.

We transmit to you a copy, bearing our seal, of the said codes, for the purpose of having them published at once, in order that they may be known to all and enter into vigor on the day designated.

May Heaven continue to aid us in our work of progress.

ISMAIL.

No. 320.

Mr. Beardsley to Mr. Fish.

No. 381.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES IN EGYPT,
Cairo, December 1, 1875. (Received December 30.)

SIR: I regret to have to inform you of a serious disaster which has happened to the Egyptian troops who but a few weeks ago crossed the Egyptian frontier and entered the province of Tigre, as mentioned in my dispatch No. 378, of November 26, 1875.

An advanced detachment of the Egyptian troops were drawn into an ambuscade, surrounded by vastly superior numbers of the enemy, and massacred to a man.

The Europeans lost were Colonel Arendruppe, whose departure from Cairo for Massowah I reported in my dispatch No. 364, of September 29, 1875; Arakel Bey, governor of Massowah, and Count Ziche.

Fortunately no American officers accompanied the lost detachment.

I shall send you further particulars at an early date.

The result of this disaster cannot be otherwise than embarrassing and prejudicial to the politics and finances of Egypt.

I am, &c.,

R. BEARDSLEY.

No. 321.

Mr. Beardsley to Mr. Fish.

No. 384.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES IN EGYPT,
Cairo, December 11, 1875. (Received January 17, 1876.)

SIR: The purchase of the Khedive's Suez Canal shares by England has been the chief topic of conversation during the past week, and the general verdict appears to be that, financially, the transaction is a wise and judicious one on the part of both England and Egypt, and that politically it is a decisive move by England on the political chess-board of the East. The French express no little chagrin at the operation, and feel that it is a serious blow to their influence in Egypt, but they have no ground of complaint against England, who only purchased on the refusal of the French capitalists, to whom the shares were first offered. Since the fall of the empire the influence of France in Egypt has been on the wane, but the exclusive control of the Suez Canal by a French company and the size and importance of the French colony in Egypt have enabled her to retain a large share of her former influence. She has, however, seen her influence gradually pale before that of other powers, and she has felt her ascendancy passing away. Her long and persistent opposition to judicial reform has cost her the good-will of the Khedive's government, and now the

sale of the Khedive's canal-shares to England cannot be otherwise than humiliating to at least her colony in Egypt. The French colony here, however, are fully aware that every inducement was offered to French capitalists to take the shares, and that England had no alternative between purchasing them herself and seeing them pass into the hands of some European power which might be hostile to her interests in the East. The transaction is significant at this juncture, and is a decisive move on the part of England in the eastern question. At all hazards she will keep open her road to India. This is recognized by all parties, and the popular impression is strong and growing that England is aiming to establish a protectorate over Egypt. Her careful and considerate treatment of Egypt during the past few years, the tenor of her public journals, the decoration of the Egyptian hereditary prince with the star of India by the Prince of Wales in October last, and now, the acquisition of so large an interest in the Suez Canal, are certainly significant facts, and especially worthy of consideration at this interesting period of the eastern question. England would care but little who was at Constantinople provided she was secure on the Nile and could control the Suez Canal, and Russia would care as little for Egypt provided she was safely seated on the Bosphorus. England would hardly go to war again in behalf of Turkey, and it is very doubtful if she could be drawn into a conflict over the eastern question unless her interests in Egypt were threatened. Her policy, therefore, is to strengthen herself here by every possible means, and this she seems to be doing as rapidly as is consistent with good policy. I am not prepared to state officially, but I have every reason to believe, that other important operations are being treated, one by which the floating debt of Egypt will be guaranteed by England. I inclose herewith extracts from the London Mail in relation to the Suez Canal purchase, including diplomatic correspondence between London, Paris, and Constantinople.

I am, &c.,

R. BEARDSLEY.

No. 322.

Mr. Beardsley to Mr. Fish.

No. 385.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES IN EGYPT,

Cairo, December 13, 1875. (Received January 17, 1876.)

SIR: The financial features of the operation by which Egypt sells to England her canal-shares are interesting.

The English government gives £4,000,000 for 176,602 shares of £20 each, which belong to the Egyptian government, and Messrs. Rothschild are to pay the money immediately. These 176,602 shares are a part of 400,000 shares of £20 each, constituting the original capital of the company, but they have been diminished in value by a renunciation on the part of Egypt of any claim for dividend up to the year 1894. This renunciation was made by the Khedive in 1869, in virtue of a convention passed between himself and the canal company for the purchase of certain rights from the company. The coupons for twenty-five years were detached from the 176,602 shares, and the company issued 120,000 "obligations" against these coupons, which are now running. These obligations are entitled to all sums accruing to the 176,602 shares up to

1894, but their value is lessened by an annual sum for a sinking-fund sufficient to redeem all of them by 1894. At the close of that year, therefore, the last obligation will have been drawn and paid off, and the 176,602 shares will be entirely free, and will enjoy whatever dividends the company are then able to pay. To compensate England for the loss of the detached coupons, Egypt agrees to pay her 5 per cent. on £4,000,000 until 1894, when the shares will begin to yield dividends again.

The Khedive still retains important claims upon the canal, as is but just that he should, in view of the great sacrifices Egypt has made in behalf of the great work, which has proved of but little advantage to her. Seventeen million pounds is a low estimate of what the canal from first to last has cost Egypt. Extraordinary concessions and rights were originally granted to the company by Saïd Pasha, which Egypt in self-defense has been compelled to take back, paying heavily therefor in every case.

The Emperor Napoleon, to whom various disputed questions were referred as arbitrator, decided that Egypt should pay an indemnity of £3,360,000 to the company for taking back certain concessions, which had been granted to it for nothing. The fresh-water canal from Cairo to Suez was constructed at great expense to the Khedive. The concession for this work was originally granted free to the canal company and brought back for £400,000, when it could not otherwise raise money.

The cutting off of twenty-five years' coupons from the shares that England has bought was the last of the Khedive's heavy sacrifices for the benefit of the company. The company needed money to continue its work; no more could be borrowed in Europe. It again appealed to the Khedive, and succeeded in inducing him to purchase various rights which had been conveyed in the original act of concession. The company ceded its rights to navigate and levy tolls on the fresh-water canal, and the right of fishing in the Suez canal and the lakes it traverses, as well as all special privileges connected with the working and maintenance of the fresh-water canal; and for these concessions it charged £800,000. It also ceded to the government, for £400,000, all the establishments which it possessed on the isthmus, such as hospitals and their furniture, and its magazines and establishments at Boulac and Damietta. To raise money to pay this £1,200,000, a fresh loan not being expedient, the Khedive cut off twenty-five years' coupons from his shares, beginning with the coupon payable on the 1st of January, 1870. Having accepted the coupons instead of money, the company capitalized them by issuing against them 120,000 "obligations," as stated above, which were to receive the 5 per cent. interest borne by the coupons. As the Khedive could not pay the £1,200,000 in money, 10 per cent. was charged him until the company realized from the obligations, and it is stated that the amount he actually paid was over £1,600,000.

Thus Egypt has made great sacrifices in behalf of the Suez Canal, sacrifices out of all proportion to her interest in the work and her resources, and she alone has reaped the fewest benefits from the success of the great work. She has lost all her transit-traffic, which was very heavy and a source of great revenue to her railways as well as to the port of Alexandria. The canal passes through an arid desert and is of no advantage whatever to local commerce. The political importance of Egypt as the highway to the East has, without doubt, been increased, but this is a doubtful advantage, as she is only too liable to be made the foot-ball of European diplomacy and a perpetual bone of contention.

But for Egypt's sacrifices the canal would never have been finished,

and it is but just that she should retain a predominating influence over the canal.

The Khedive is still entitled to 15 per cent. of the excess profits after paying the statutory 5 per cent. on the shares, and owns also 2,500 founder's shares which also participate in these surplus profits. He owns jointly with the company large tracts of land all along the canal, and finally the whole property reverts to him at the expiration of ninety-nine years from the date of the company's concession, about eighty years from now.

The Khedive's government thus remains the preponderating influence in the affairs of the canal. England now possesses an important interest in the original capital of the company; but out of a capital which has to be paid off out of the profits of the company before the expiration of the lease, amounting to about £13,000,000, or, according to some estimates, nearly £16,000,000, she has only what is equivalent, £3,532,000, the par value of the 176,602 shares. To give her complete control of the canal, however, she has only to buy the balance of the 400,000 shares, say 223,398 shares, as only the holders of the original 400,000 shares have the power of voting at the meetings.

The value of these shares to England is not to be measured by a money standard entirely. The transaction is significant of the fact that the influence of France in Egypt has given way to, and been in a great measure supplanted by, that of England. France has only herself to blame for not being the owner of these 176,602 shares to-day, as they were first offered to her on far more favorable terms than Egypt finally made with England. On November 12, the French house of Dervien & Co. were asked to negotiate the affair, forty-eight hours only being given for consideration.

The Egyptian government offered 10 per cent. for the nineteen years during which the coupons were detached. The next day, November 13, 11 per cent. was offered by the Egyptian finance minister. Messrs. Dervien & Co. submitted the operations to a group of Paris bankers, who listened to, debated, and rejected it. The Egyptian government extended the time to the 14th November, and another group of the leading Paris bankers was invited to co-operate, but with no success. On the 19th November, the representative of Messrs. Dervien & Co. at Alexandria telegraphed to Paris that the Khedive did not wish to sell his shares; that he only desired an advance of 85,000,000 francs for three months, guaranteed by the deposit of his shares, and the transfer of 15 per cent. of the subsidy which the Suez Company allot to the Egyptian government. If at the end of three months the repayment was not made, the pledge became the property of the lenders.

Messrs. Dervien & Co. accepted the proposition on condition that the financial groups at Paris would support them. They, however, seemed to have received no support or encouragement whatever, and the time for ratification expired on the 26th November, at 12 o'clock. In the mean time England was not ignorant of the situation, and was kept fully informed by telegraph by General Stanton, her agent and consul-general in Egypt, of the stage of the negotiations with the French bankers. On the final failure of the negotiations England was prepared to purchase the Khedive's shares, paying therefor the market-value, 600 francs, instead of the par value, 500 francs, and accepting 5 per cent., instead of 10 and 11 per cent. offered to the French bankers.

England has thus treated Egypt fairly and justly in this transaction, while at the same time she has made a most advantageous arrangement for herself, both politically and financially. Egypt has done exceed-

ingly well, as she sells for £4,000,000 what can produce nothing for nineteen years. This sum relieves her of all present financial embarrassments, lifts her out of the hands of money-lenders, and gives her a chance to place her finances in the hands of men who can put them in order.

I will close this dispatch with a statement of the different kinds of bonds and obligations of the Suez Canal as near as I can obtain them. First, there are the 400,000 shares of original capital of £20 each, then 333,333 obligations of £20 each, bearing interest at 5 per cent., then 200,000 thirty-year bonds of £4 each, redeemable at £5, and bearing 8 per cent. interest, and finally 400,000 bonds of £3.85 each, at 5 per cent. interest, issued for the consolidation of unpaid coupons.

I am, &c.,

R. BEARDSLEY.

Vice-consul General, in charge.

No. 323.

Mr. Comanos to Mr. Fish.

No. 5.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL

OF THE UNITED STATES,

Cairo, Egypt, February 18, 1876. (Received March 15.)

SIR:

Herewith please find a translation of the official account of the defeat of the Egyptian troops by the Abyssinians.

I am, &c.,

N. D. COMANOS,

Vice-Consul-General, in charge.

[Inclosure.—Translation.]

Official account of the late Abyssinian expedition from Wakäi Misrië.

The intelligence published at intervals in the newspapers has called attention to the conduct of the Abyssinian government, which during the last three years has provoked incursions into our territory, and has pillaged our frontier population.

The Egyptian government has on many occasions addressed the Abyssinian government in courteous terms, reminding it that its acts were incompatible with good neighborly relations; that it was but just to return to it that which it had taken from it, and that it should take measures to prevent the recurrence of such outrages.

Without regarding our rightful representations, and far from confining himself to the iniquitous acts which he had committed, the King of Abyssinia assembled recently a considerable army in the Hamacin province, bordering the territory of Massawa. He thus threatened our frontiers with immediate war, the more so as he put an end to all commercial relations between the two countries, forbidding Abyssinian subjects to pass into Egypt and Egyptian merchants to penetrate into Abyssinia. This state of affairs having carried dread into the heart of our frontier provinces, and deprived them of the security which our government is bound to assure to them, it sent to Massawa two battalions of mounted infantry, under the command of Colonel Arendrup Bey, in order to restore confidence to the people and to guard our frontiers. After the arrival of these two battalions at Massawa, the bulk of the Abyssinian army abandoned Hamacin and withdrew into the interior of the country. But the remaining troops posted near our frontier continued to pillage and maltreat all Egyptian subjects falling into their hands. In face of these acts of hostility, Colonel Arendrup entered Hamacin at the head of an armed force, including the aforementioned battalions, formed each of eight companies, and of six other companies which happened at that time to be in Sanhit—that is to say, a total of twenty-two companies of infantry and two batteries of artillery. It was required, to guard our frontiers, to occupy temporarily the Hamacin, and to endeavor to come to an understanding in a treaty with the King of Abyssinia.

Upon the entry of the Egyptian troops into the Hamacin, Cougag Dabron, com-

mander of the Abyssinian troops, fell back upon Adua, capital of the Tigris province. Although the Egyptian soldiers were received with manifestations of joy by the inhabitants of the Hamacin, Colonel Arendrup distributed in the following manner the twenty-two companies of which he had the disposal. Six companies remained at Fidour under the orders of Dasholz, the chief of the battalion. Passing afterward by Atkhal, where he left seven companies with Lieut. Col. Rustem Naghi Bey, Colonel Arendrup marched with the seven remaining companies to Goudet, near the river Marb. Arriving at the last-named place, he formed an advance guard of four companies, under the orders of Adjutant-Major Murgan Agha, and ordered him to advance farther into the country, though the three other companies remained at Goudet. It appears from the news lately received by telegraphic dispatch that a part of the inhabitants of Goudet came on the 16th day of the month Chawal to Murgan Agha, announcing that the Abyssinian soldiers were marching on their town, and implored his aid and protection against the invaders.

Upon this information, and at the instance of Comte Zichy, the adjutant-major pushed forward part of the advance guard, which soon encountered the Abyssinian troops, putting them to flight, and killing fifteen men.

The news spreading on the morrow that an engagement had taken place between the advance guard and the Abyssinians, they hastened to inform Colonel Arendrup of it, who at once marched on Goudet, accompanied by Lieut. Col. Rustem Bey, Arakel Bey, governor of Massawa, and five companies. Arriving first at Goudet, Colonel Arendrup left the two companies which had escorted him, and took with him two others which he found there to reinforce the advance guard. Having taken part for some time in the combat, he left the adjutant-major in command and returned to Goudet with four soldiers.

However, as a great number of Abyssinian soldiers soon followed them, a square was formed of the soldiers which were at Goudet, Colonel Arendrup placed himself in the midst, and a fight took place lasting from one o'clock a. m. until evening. The governor of Massawa and Colonel Arendrup were the first struck and killed. Lieut. Col. Rustem Bey, wounded by a ball in the head, bound his wound with his handkerchief and continued to command his soldiers for some time longer. Struck by a second ball which brought him down, he ordered, in expiring, to charge with the bayonet and to hold on till death.

The chief of the battalion of artillery, Ismail Raghi Effendi, and the chief of the battalion of infantry, Achmet Fanzi Effendi, sustained the struggle with much bravery and vigor. As much can be said of the soldiers, who, when their ammunition failed, charged the Abyssinians with the bayonet and continued the battle with fury until they fell victims to their devotion. Of the eleven companies which took part in the battle, one sub-lieutenant, one aid-major, and twenty soldiers fell as prisoners into the hands of the enemy.

The heroic resistance displayed by these brave men, from the chief officers to the plain soldiers, is a proof that every one performed his military duties with the greatest honor.

The number of deaths is 770 men of the infantry, including one entire battery. As the engagement lasted a long while, the Abyssinians must have suffered considerable losses.

Recent news states that Ras Raga, Vezir of the King of Abyssinia, also Ras Ourania, commander-in-chief of the Abyssinian troops, and the governors of Adua and of Hamacin, were killed. Later intelligence places the number of Abyssinian losses at 15,000 men. A little while after the battle, an army composed of infantry and cavalry, commanded by the King of Abyssinia in person, appeared before Atkhal, and summoned, in writing, the Egyptian soldiers who were there to deliver up their arms, and leaving them free to withdraw or to remain in the same place.

The Egyptians having answered that as their commander was absent the letter must be sent to him, and that they could not of themselves accept the propositions of the King, the Abyssinian soldiers retired without making any attack.

After spiking four cannons, which they were forced to leave on the spot for want of horses, the Egyptian detachment likewise fell back to a place called Harkikon, near Massawa, where it is now. It results from the aforementioned details that the misfortune met with by the troops which were under the command of Colonel Arendrup was occasioned in part because they were not numerous enough, and in part by the distance which separated the one from the other. But our brave soldiers shall be avenged!

His Highness the Khedive has decided to send a complete expedition, under the command of his excellency Ratib Pasha, general-in-chief of the Egyptian army. Four steamers filled with soldiers have already departed for Suez, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, *en route* for Massawa, and the remainder will follow soon.

The expedition consists of four regiments of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, and three batteries of artillery. His excellency Ratib Pasha will have as chief of staff General Loring, and will be accompanied by other chief officers, among whom are their excellencies Osman Rifky Pasha, brigadier-general, and four staff-officers.

No. 324.

Mr. Comanos to Mr. Fish.

No. 7.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES,*Cairo, Egypt, February 26, 1876. (Received March 22.)*

SIR: I have the honor to report, as requested by instruction No. 236, November 24, 1875, that the organization of the new judicial tribunals is completed, as duly advised you by dispatch No. 389, January 6, 1876.

The new courts were officially installed on the 1st January, 1876, and they began to hear cases regularly on the 24th February. They are, therefore, in the full exercise of their functions.

No further communication is necessary to enable the President to issue his proclamation suspending the operation of the act of June 22, 1860, respecting consular jurisdiction during his pleasure, so far as relates to Egypt and to the matters which are, by the regulations of the new tribunals in Egypt, brought under the jurisdiction of those tribunals.

I am, &c.,

N. D. COMANOS,

Vice-Consul-General, in charge.

No. 325.

Mr. Fish to Mr. Comanos.

No. 247.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, March 31, 1876.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your dispatch No. 7, dated 26th of February last, reporting the organization of the new judicial tribunals in Egypt, and that they begun to hear cases regularly on the 24th of that month. The organization of the new judicial tribunals having been completed, and they being in the full exercise of their functions, the President has, in accordance with the act of March 23, 1874, issued his proclamation, dated the 27th of the present month, suspending, during the pleasure of the President, the operation of the act of June 22, 1860, as to the dominions subject to the government of Egypt, so far as the new tribunals may embrace matter now cognizable by our ministers and consuls, except as to cases actually commenced.

I inclose herewith six copies of the proclamation above referred to.

I am, &c.,

HAMILTON FISH.

No. 326.

Mr. Comanos to Mr. Fish.

No. 22.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL

OF THE UNITED STATES,

Cairo, Egypt, April 21, 1876. (Received May 11.)

SIR: I have the honor to announce the unexpected return of H. H. Hassan Pasha, third son of the Khedive, from the Abyssinian expedition on the 13th instant.

It is rumored that the Egyptian forces have been defeated with great

loss. Prince Hassan complains of the cowardice of the Egyptian troops, many of whom threw down their arms and fled when attacked by the Abyssinians.

His Highness the Khedive has called out the Bashi Bazouks and Bedouin, irregular troops, and dispatched them to the seat of war.

I am, &c.,

N. D. COMANOS,
Vice-Consul-General, in charge.

No. 327.

Mr. Comanos to Mr. Fish.

No. 52.]

AGENCY AND CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES IN EGYPT,
Cairo, September 18, 1876. (Received October 13.)

SIR: I have the honor to report that Saturday the 16th instant, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the imperial firman, announcing the abdication of Sultan Murad and the accession of Sultan Abdul Hamid to the throne of Turkey, was read in the Gezireh palace in the presence of His Highness the Khedive, the ministers of state, Ottoman notables, the patriarchs of the several religious communities, and the consular corps.

The firman stated that the cause of the abdication by the Ex-Sultan was incompetency and illness. The new Sultan expresses confidence in the Khedive, and desires him to secure the prosperity of the country and the happiness of the people.

I am, &c.,

N. D. COMANOS,
Vice-Consul-General, in charge.

TUNIS.

No. 328.

Mr. Heap to Mr. Hunter.

No. 214.]

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
Tunis, July 6, 1875. (Received July 26.)

SIR: The Italian scientific commission mentioned in my dispatch No. 210, dated 14th June last, sent to examine the land separating the Schotts of the Great Desert and the sea at the Gulf of Gabes, in the south of this regency, has returned, and I am informed the engineers have found the obstacles to the formation of an inland sea at this point practically insurmountable. They have adopted the theory I gave in my dispatch on this subject, No. 187, dated November 14, 1874, that the Lake Isitou of the ancients, instead of being inland of Gabes, is simply the sea inclosed between the island of Gerba and the mainland.

The report of this commission will be made to the International Geographical Congress that will meet in Paris in August next.

I have, &c.,

G. H. HEAP.

No. 329.

Mr. Cubisol to Mr. Hunter.

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

Tunis, May 12, 1876. (Received June 8.)

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that on Friday, the 5th instant, a Mussulman, who had had a slight altercation with an Israelite, killed the latter by cutting his throat with a sharp instrument which he held in his hand.

The police appeared on the scene immediately, arrested and imprisoned the culprit, who was tried by the Bey on Sunday, the 7th instant, condemned to death, and executed immediately.

At the moment of the accident, however, the Jews, hearing of the murder, came to the spot in crowds, took up the body and carried it through the city, uttering cries of revenge; they were from five to six thousand in number, and every time they came to a consulate they stopped, uttering vociferous cries.

It is asserted that the principal promoters of this disturbance were Israelites under the protection of foreign powers, although the Jew who was killed was a Tunisian subject.

The fact of this disturbance, provoked in a manner by foreigners, attracted the attention of the Bey's government on account of the dangers with which it might be attended in the midst of a population almost exclusively Mussulman, and in order to prevent a recurrence of acts of this kind, his excellency, the Bey's prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, has just addressed to the consular corps the circular of which I inclose a copy, that you may be informed as to the facts, which in such cases are often garbled by the press.

I avail myself of this occasion, sir, to inform you also that the Tunisian government has just given the concession for a railway from Tunis to Beja to a French company; this railway will extend about 150 kilometers westward in the regency, for it will extend to the mine of Dgebbat, (a mine of argentiferous lead,) the concession of which, it is said, has also been given to the same company.

I have, &c.,

J. CUBISOL,
Vice-Consul, in charge.

[Inclosure.—Translation.]

TUNIS, *May 9, 1876.*

Mr. CONSUL: On Friday last a murder was committed in one of the bazaars of Tunis by a Mussulman, the victim being an Israelite. A few moments after, the culprit was arrested and delivered up to justice.

Notwithstanding the promptness and energy of the measures taken to satisfy the law, a large number of Israelites, both Tunisian subjects and those under the protection of foreign governments, created a disturbance which was as annoying to the government of His Highness as it was dangerous to the public safety.

They immediately closed their shops in the bazaars and carried the body of the murdered man through the city with cries of revenge, stopping before several consulates, although the deceased was a Tunisian subject.

Thanks to the firmness and moderation of the local police this appeal to religious passions was not productive of the fatal consequences that might have been expected, the entire responsibility for which would have fallen upon the originators of the disturbance.

There is, however, in these acts a gravity which cannot escape your observation, and which renders it my duty to call your most serious attention to the dangers with which their renewal might be attended.

The government of His Highness, which takes every care to maintain order and to guarantee public safety in the country, and to do justice to all its subjects, without distinction, cannot recognize their right, still less the right of foreigners, to create scenes which disturb public tranquillity, and which are entirely without excuse. It is, therefore, firmly resolved not to tolerate them, and to disperse by force, if need be, disorderly assemblages which may be formed in future under similar circumstances.

I desire, therefore, Mr. Consul, to ask your co-operation to aid the government of His Highness to prevent a recurrence of these scenes, which are so much to be regretted, by giving the Israelites under your protection to understand that they have no right to interfere in cases of this nature.

The Tunisian government alone has the right to try and punish its subjects for crimes committed by them. As to preventing them, that would be asking more of it than of any other government.

Written on the 15th of Rabia Teni, 1293, (9th of May, 1876.)

The prime minister and minister of foreign affairs,

KHÉRRÉDINE.

No. 330.

Mr. Fish to Mr. Cubisol.

No. 120.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, June 13, 1876.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your dispatch of the 12th ultimo, with an inclosure relative to the murder at Tunis of an Israelite by a Tunisian.

The request which is contained in the note upon the subject addressed to you by the minister of foreign affairs, that you give "Israelites under your protection to understand that they have no right to interfere in cases of this nature," is reasonable and justified by the circumstances, and you are therefore instructed to comply with the request. You will also furnish a complete list of all persons to whom any promise of protection has been given by the United States consulate at any time, and of all who now claim to be under its protection.

I am, &c.,

HAMILTON FISH.

URUGUAY AND PARAGUAY.

No. 331.

Mr. Caldwell to Mr. Fish.

No. 25.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Montevideo, October 16, 1875. (Received November 23.)

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that civil war has been formally inaugurated in this republic, and two combats have taken place, attended, considering the forces engaged, with much effusion of blood.

Ever since the accession of the present party to power, Buenos Ayres, whither the principal men of the opposition fled, has been the center of conspiracy against this government. On the return of the leaders who had been banished to Havana, and who actually landed in the United States, large numbers crossed over from Buenos Ayres, and, entering the northern department of the republic, commenced military operations.

The officer commanding for the government in Salto passed over to