

Hall

27 June 48

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Washington 27th June 1848

Dear Sir,

A very worthy & coloured woman whom I have known for several years, and respect highly for her industrious habits and upright life, is now at my office, and represents that her daughter, a tall, slender well proportioned girl married a coloured man by the name of Alfred Thomas, and that both of them were taken by Mr. Fichlin a member of Congress from Ill. to that state, at the end of the last session of Congress, viz. about 14 months ago.

They went to his place, and the mother had two letters from her daughter after she got them; then an interval occurred, when no letter was received. But in Nov. last, a letter was recd. by Jos. Bradley Esq. of this city, with whom Alfred had formerly lived, written at Nashville the 22d of that month, by a Mr. E. C. Dyer, once of this city, in which he says that on the Sunday previous he had met with Alfred and his wife whom he had known here, and who he said, appeared to be very much alarmed, and afraid of being kidnapped. They said they had been living with Mr. Fichlin who desired to take them back to Washington, by the way of Alabama; that on reaching Franklin, in Tennessee they were alarmed at something they heard, and re-

Letter to Salmon P. Chase
Chase Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

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went to go further in that direction, and after some
parley, came to Nashville, but was followed by two
gentlemen who seemed to take a peculiar interest
in them - that an attempt was made to enter
their room at night, ~~for~~ by some one for the purpose
you, as Alfred supposed, of securing their free pa-
pers.

Dyer says in his letter, that he suspected foul
play, and did all he could to protect them;
that he took them to the Rev. Mr. Scates and
to Judge Campbell, the latter of whom provided
them a lodging that night, and on Monday got
their papers endorsed by the Clerk of the courts
and had them ^(Alfred this way) placed on board the Steamer Sus-
quehanna H. E. McComas Master, who pledged
himself to land them safely in Cincinnati.

Since then, the distressed mother has heard
nothing of them; and she desires me to cause in-
quiries to be made respecting them. After this
statement of the case, I will not apologise for
asking your aid in the matter, for I am sure you
will cheerfully give it if in your power. I
hope that through some appropriate agency,
you will be able to trace them; and if he actually
came to Cincinnati, it is probable that the col-
oured people there will have some knowledge of
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to very grateful to a mother whose affections are
human even here, where her race are but chat-
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your answer.

Yours Very Respectfully
D. A. Hall

What think you of 345 indictments against Drayton,
Sayre and English, arising out of the negro abduction cases
in this city? So many are in preparation, viz. there are 41
owners of slaves taken - an ind^t for each vs. each prisoner,
that is $3 \times 41 = 123$. There were 74 slaves: each prisoner
is charged with abducting, or transporting each slave
that is $74 \times 3 = 222$; add the two sums together and
you have the aggregate 345.

Queries. 1st Can an indictment be sustained for
the larceny of slaves, where they go voluntarily from
their masters, and where the alleged larceny consists only
in receiving them on board a vessel at a distance from
their domicile?

2^d If the prisoners may be indicted for larceny, can they
for the same act, be indicted for enticing and transporting
the slaves away? under the act of Md. of '96 (Chapt. 6)
Sec. 19?

Drayton who was the soul of the enterprise, has
kept up a very good courage till now, but has great hor-
ror of being sent to the Penitentiary; he says he can
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under which he is menaced with that fate, is as you are no doubt aware, the act of Md. of 1737, Chapt. 2, Sec. IV. If he can be defended against the charge under that act, he cares for nothing else.

The indictments will be laid before the grand jury this week; they are prepared under both acts, but it strikes me that the prosecutor may be compelled to elect which indicting them under. That question at all events will be said. Prisoners may not be but twice in peril for the "same offence". I guess it will be said that the stealing is one offence, for which they may be tried, and if acquitted, they may be indicted for aiding slaves to escape from their masters, or for transporting them from the country.—But I dare say Mr. Mann has written you fully on this subject.

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Yours Very Truly
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Salmon P. Chase's diary entry for July 5, 1848 includes the following:

"-- called on Bates the barber to get him to make enquiries about colored boy & wife, supposed to be kidnapped &c by Ficklin M.C. of Illinois --"