

"A Slave Case," New York (NY) *Tribune*, May 27, 1851
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A Slave Case.

MAYS LICK, Ky., Wednesday, May 7, 1851.

To the Editor of *The Tribune*:

About the 1st of May inst. there was a stampede of blacks from Lewis County, Ky., numbering about 20. They made for the Ohio River and succeeded in crossing to the Ohio side, and when two days out, they were apprehended and brought back to Mayslick and put in jail. Their captors asked and received \$200 each, or \$4,000 for their trouble. The blacks say they were induced to run off by the false assertion of some white Abolitionists who infect the quiet and romantic hills of Lewis, and who are dressed in sheep's clothing, and prowl about from house to house, and by their false representations of the sweets of liberty and its attendant blessings, allure them from a home where they are well and comfortably provided for, to a land of so-called freedom, where, instead of bettering their condition, they are much worse off and to be pitied more, where they are in continual dread of being apprehended and brought back, and then, as a certain consequence, to be sold into Southern slavery.

I have a case in point. Among the twenty slaves who sloped, as stated above, there was a mother and seven children, aged from 25 to 12, who belonged to a Mr. Fagan, a bachelor of Lewis County, who were, by Mr. Fagan's will, to be free at his death. The old man laid great store to the family. The mother was his housekeeper, the oldest son his general superintendent, or overseer, and the others were as much in the confidence of the old man as the mother and son, and to sum it all up, a more happy and seemingly contented family of blacks could not be found in a day's ride, but unfortunately for them, they turned a willing ear to the seductive and alluring tales of these arch traitors—Kentucky abolitionists. They started, they gained the free soil of Ohio, and what has been the result? Apprehension, and sold to a slave dealer, who passed through this place yesterday, with the old lady in a buggy with himself, and the children he

was driving before him. A sad spectacle, and the certain and inevitable lot of all slaves that endeavor to escape and are foiled in the attempt. As they were passing through here I could see the tears rolling down their cheeks. They were weeping because they were then on their way South, and there to be separated, probably forever. I could not help but exclaim, "Unfortunate and deluded mother, and too confident children, the victims of your own folly and haste, long will you repent the day you conceived the idea of gaining the Ohio shore, and many will be the curse you will utter against that wolf in sheep's clothing, and who stole the livery of heaven to serve the devil in."

Now do you not believe that those blacks would have been better off if those infernal Abolitionists had not put it into their heads to run off? Please publish this in your paper and answer through the same medium. Your friend, GEO. L. HARDY.

P.S.—The mother and seven children were sold for \$4,200, a tolerably good price. If Mr. Fagan were to offer you the money would you have any conscientious scruples about receiving it?

☞ We think Mr. George L. Hardy will have to try again. When he writes us, and procures some person of known respectability to guarantee the fact, that he has himself become a slave in order to enjoy the transcendent blessings of the patriarchal institution, we shall believe he tells the truth in praising slavery, but until then ask leave to be skeptical.

For our own part we must say that if we were reduced to bondage we should do our best to escape from it; were Mr. Hardy our fellow in that calamity we should count on his assistance and participation in our flight. The greater the danger and more certain the punishment attending failure, the keener would be our zeal in devising and executing the attempt. Possibly it would be a great sin to run away, but we venture to say that we should have the sympathy of all civilized men whom misfortune had not made slaveholders. It is said, too, that on some occasions and under some circumstances, even Kentuckians have shown a preference of liberty to chains.

Such facts as those stated by our correspondent, instead of being favorable to slavery, only prove how great and complicated are its evils. What must be the inhumanity of that system in which even the simple endeavor to exercise the first natural right of men and take possession of one's own body becomes a crime to be punished? And how ineradicable must be the innate desire for freedom when born slaves, in a position so favored as those of Mr. Fagan, risk all to gain it.

Mr. Hardy asks whether we would take the money paid to Fagan for these slaves. We answer that as a gift we should beg leave to decline it, not being just now in need of such donations; but that we would gladly receive it in payment for subscriptions to *The Tribune*, (Daily \$5, Semi-Weekly \$3, and Weekly \$2 per annum; the Weekly \$1, to clubs of 20 persons.) And we take leave to invite Mr. Hardy and Mr. Fagan to employ the entire sum for that purpose. With it they might circulate in Kentucky some two or three thousand copies of the various editions of *The Tribune*, and they may be sure that we will do everything in our power to render our paper truly useful to its readers. We are not certain that in any other way the money will be spent so much to the advantage of that noble, but in some respects, unfortunate State.