



The Pearl and the Diver.

Few of those who adorn themselves with pearls have any idea of the hardships and sufferings that have brought these pearls into their possession. Not only does every pearl cost the life of a hundred animals, but the risking of a human life, and without doubt its disablement. But it is not necessary to repeat what has so often been told; how the diver places a pair of pinchers on his nose, and weights on his feet, plunges down into the depths, to be brought to the surface a few minutes later, a limp and almost lifeless body. Many are they who leave Bahrein for the pearling banks, never to return, or to return crippled for life. But what excites our pity even more is that those who risk their lives so constantly, are not rewarded for their toil, and from one diving season to the other they live in need of the bare necessities of life. How well the pearl merchant has the poor diver in his grasp can best be seen from the following

CONTRACT OF A DIVER WITH HIS EMPLOYER.

It is necessary to state that I, Sebt bin Ali Abu Gheith, have agreed with Othman Mohammed bin Ramel on the necessary conditions as given below, and these are as follows:

First—That I am bound to dive for Othman upon my arrival at Ceylon, whenever the diving begins, with his boats and at his command, and not to make any expenses except at his command.

Second—That he receives a third of all I gain through diving, and this statement has my firm support, without aversion or feeling of compulsion.

Third—That whatever expenses I have from the time of my leaving the wharf of Bahrein till my arriving at the place of diving, i. e., Ceylon, will be deducted from my earnings after Othman's third has been deducted according to the stipulations.

Fourth—That the expenses shall not be taken from the original earnings, but only after Othman's third has been deducted.

Fifth—That, after we have arrived at Ceylon and acquired a boat, I am bound to take ship at the beginning of the diving season, and I must work with diligence and to the utmost of my ability.

Sixth—That I have no right to take ship with another, or to enter into an agreement with another, nor to take ship in any boat other than the one Othman shall assign.

Seventh—After diving has begun I am bound to dive, nor may I desist to dive, except for a valid reason, such as sickness or the like.

Eighth—That I may not leave the place of diving except after orders from Othman, or after I have received permission from him to go to Ali or some other place.

Ninth—That all my earnings from first to last remain in the hands of Othman as it comes in day by day, and that the same remains with him unmolested till the end of the diving season.

Tenth—That, if we reach the place of diving, and no diving is done, and we return and arrive at Bahrein, I return to Othman above mentioned all that he has expended for me.

Eleventh—That, if I do not deliver to Othman immediately upon my arrival in Bahrein all that he has spent on me, he may put me aboard with any captain he wishes, for diving upon the high seas, and take his dues from him.

Twelfth—That, if we arrive at the place of diving and anything is done by me at variance with these conditions written above, I am subject to the punishment demanded by the truth.

Thirteenth—That I assure Othman that I am a diver acquainted with the various kinds of diving, and if I turn out different in any way, he gets the full half of my earnings. Verily, I, Sebt bin Ali Abu Gheith, of Kuweit, living at Kebla belonging to Kuweit, I, who place my signature and my seal below, have made an agreement with Othman Mohammed bin Ramel to embark for the diving at Ceylon and he turns in to me all my expenses beforehand. As stated above, he deducts it from my earnings after the deduction of the third, for he gets a third of the earnings, and takes it from what remains, according to the stipulations above. I am bound to the above mentioned to abide by what is written above, and that without any cessation or opposition or deceit, and if I do not live up to the above stipulations, I am liable to the punishment of deductions as stated above, and I am open to full and just punishment at the hands of whatever government to which he may accuse me. And I have given permission to one to witness to this agreement and to one to approve the writing as true, of whatever government he may be. And God is a witness of all we say, and he is a sufficient and a merciful witness, and pray for Mohammed.

Witnessed after reading.

MOHAMMED BIN MUBAREK EL MURSA'AD.

Witness of the writer.

ABDUL AZIZ ERRASHID ESSA'ID.

Signed and sealed.

SEBT BIN ALI ABU GHEITH.

It is needless to say that the "punishment demanded by the truth" is usually called for and is meted out with severity, and by men who themselves have not the faintest idea of truth. The result is that the poor diver is usually cheated out of most, if not all, of his hard earned money, and is almost penniless till at the next diving season another advance is made to him under equally exacting conditions.