

came infinitely lower afterwards. The European and American traders first came to these islands for sandal wood, and then for labourers. These traders were a most degraded set of men. They aimed at the extinction of the natives by introducing firearms and disease amongst them.

The labour traffic arose from the Colonial Government's authorizing planters and traders to hire these natives to work on plantations in the adjacent colonies or neighboring islands, where the resident native labour was insufficient. The traffic soon became as bad as the slave trade. The natives signed papers they could not read, and made contracts with men whose language they did not understand. Sometimes they were sold by their chiefs or relatives; at other times all bargaining formalities were done away with. Men at enmity one with another were confined in the same hold, with the natural result, that very few were left at the end of the journey. Of eighty hired in this manner, one evening, only ten remained, the next morning, to fulfil their engagement, the captain having permitted the wounded as well as the dead to be thrown over-board.

The horrors of this traffic have been brought to light through the petitions forwarded by the missionaries to the British Government. The treatment of women on the plantations cannot be spoken of here.

The introduction of a low form of civilization unaccompanied by Christianity is the sure precursor of the Christian missionary's suffering martyrdom.

On the island of Fotuna—which is one of the most difficult mission fields in the South Seas—the proportion of Christians to the whole population is one to five. The traders asserted that one year on the plantations would do more to civilize the natives than ten years of missionary teaching, but facts prove the opposite.

While the influence of the traders was the chief cause of hindrance to the progress of Christianity in these islands, yet it was not the only one. The religion of the people was strongly at variance with the spirit of Christianity. At first the missionary was regarded as a sacred man receiving power from a foreign spirit. Every event of any importance was referred to supernatural causes. Hence those calamities which befel them after the advent of the missionary were regarded as punishments from their own gods who were jealous of the introduction of Christianity. Very often the missionary's life depended on the checking of an epidemic, or on the bursting of a passing cloud. Their sacred men too, were roused into enmity against a religion, which by exposing the impotency of witchcraft, very naturally lessened their power. Then there was that opposition which is always aroused in men by a religion