

*To His Excellency the Right Honorable the Earl of Belmore, Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales, and Captain General and Vice Admiral of the same.*

May it please your Excellency.

The petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth,

That your petitioners are Christian missionaries, representing Presbyterian Churches, labouring on the six southern islands of the New Hebrides Group, viz.:—Aneiteum, Fotuna, Tanna, Aniwa, Erromanga, and Faté.

That in their capacity as such they, of course, are deeply interested in the elevation of the natives of these islands, physically and socially as well as morally and spiritually; so that while on the one hand any plan which has a tendency to promote so desirable an object has not only their perfect acquiescence but their hearty support, on the other they cannot but regard it as their duty to oppose any system which is found to interfere with the natural rights of the natives, and with the furtherance of those ends for which missionaries settle among them.

That in fulfilment of their duty and in the interests of humanity they feel themselves bound to lay before your Excellency certain facts and allegations as embodied in the accompanying "statement" relating to a system of traffic in human beings as at present carried on among these islands.

That your petitioners humbly and earnestly request your Excellency that an investigation be made into the working of this traffic, that it be put under such supervision and control as shall prevent the rights of the natives from being ruthlessly violated; and that some one be appointed to care for the interests and investigate the grievances of those natives of these islands who reside in the colony of which you are the head.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

JOHN GEDDIE, D. D.

JOHN INGLIS.

JOHN G. PATON.

JOSEPH COPELAND.

DONALD MORRISON.

J. D. GORDON.

JAMES COSH, M. A.

THOMAS NEILSON.

**Letter from the Rev. J B Smythe, Chaplain on board H. M. S. "Brisk."**

We have great pleasure in affording our readers an opportunity of knowing the views entertained by an impartial and competent observer of the work conducted by the agents of the Wesleyan, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches, in the islands of the South Seas.

The Rev. J. B. Smythe, Chaplain on board H. M. S. *Brisk*, has during two visits of the ship to the Fiji, and other islands, made himself acquainted with Missionary operations on the islands visited by the *Brisk*, and published the following interesting account of his observations:—

*To the Rev. Stephen Rabone, Secretary of the Mission in Fiji:—*

M. M. S. "BRISK," }  
Sydney Harbour, Nov. 25, 1867. }

REV. SIR,—You are doubtless anxious to know the result of the visit of H. M. S. *Brisk* to Fiji, in so far as it relates to the murder of the late Mr. Baker and his seven native teachers. Information touching this will be best derived from the official report; therefore, I need only state, that, owing to the influence brought to bear upon Thakombau, the acknowledged chief (or king, as he is styled) of Bau, and of that part of the group where the cruel deed was perpetrated; he called meetings of his subordinate chiefs to take counsel together, and arrange to proceed into the interior as soon as possible, with a strong force, and punish the murderers in such a way as to mark his abhorrence of their wanton and barbarous act. It is satisfactory to know, that, of this outrage, but one feeling exists amongst all the Christian natives and resident Europeans. The deepest sympathy is felt for the poor widow and her children, and the cry for chastisement is universal. Punishment adequate to the offence is sure to be inflicted, although from the almost impenetrable nature of the country, the inappropriate time of the year (their cotton planting season,) the tedious ceremonies which precede all Fijian movements, and last but not least, preparing to meet an American debt of very questionable equity; the guilty may escape longer than is desirable. However, this foul massacre is the last act of the kind which is likely to be committed in Fiji; for this raid into the remote interior will in all probability strike the final blow at the root of heathenism, and render life secure throughout the entire group.

Intense zeal carried poor Mr. Baker beyond the bounds of prudence, and his error lies in proceeding on his way after repeated warnings to the contrary. In him a valuable life has been cut off, for his highest aim was to spread Christianity in those dark and cannibal regions, which a heart less brave than his own would have shrunk from penetrating.

I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity of recording my high appreciation of the great and good work which the missionaries are accomplishing in Fiji; and which must be apparent to every unprejudiced and