

defence, that no fewer than four of their men had been barbarously murdered by persons who had carried them away from their native island—giving names, dates, and circumstances.

Other instances of a similar kind can be given.

4th. In the case of those who go of their own accord, the nature of the agreements entered into with them is very imperfectly, and in most cases not at all, understood by them; and there is no real security that we know of that these agreements shall be faithfully fulfilled by those who carry them away.

This has been acknowledged by those who carry them away, and has been stated to us by persons in the Fijis who have access to natives imported there. It ought to be borne in mind that almost every island in Western Polynesia has a distinct language of its own. The only medium of communication between the natives and the traders is the English language; and this is understood only by a few, and by them very imperfectly. On most islands it is not understood at all.

5th. Most of these natives, as is well known to us, are kept away from their native islands for longer periods than they engaged for.

This statement is fully borne out by individual instances which have come under our own observation, and by the fact that it is the universal complaint of the natives, wherever we come in contact with them. One case out of many we may mention.

In August, 1866, a small schooner of about ten tons burthen took twenty-six natives from the islands of Emon and Faté to Fiji, for a term of six months. Up to this date, (August, 1867), not one of those taken from Faté, at least, has been returned.

6th. Many of these natives are very poorly paid.

Instance. For five months' service on board a vessel trading in these seas, a native of Faté received four handkerchiefs, a few pipes, and a few figs of tobacco.

Other instances of a similar kind can be given.

7th. The wives of many of those carried away, despairing of their return, enter into relations with, and become the wives of other men. This dissolution of social ties, is a fruitful source of disturbance, of destruction of property, and of war.

Instance. In July this year a native of Pango, on the island of Faté returned from Queensland. He had been away for about three years. During his absence, the wife he had left behind him had become the wife of another man; on account of which the village had at the time been brought to the

verge of a civil war. Immediately after his arrival in July last, hostilities began between the two parts of the village inhabited by the friends of the respective parties. A great deal of angry talk passed between them, threats were made of setting houses on fire, several plantations were destroyed, and the utmost confusion and alarm prevailed for some days; when at length the matter was settled by the first husband consenting to give up his claim to the woman on condition of receiving twenty pigs as a solatium. The matter did not end there. A month or so after these occurrences, the woman, whose second marriage had been the occasion of these disturbances, fled to the house of her former husband, and was received by him as his wife. This naturally led to the renewal of hostilities between the two ends of the village. And there is every reason to believe that, but for the presence of the missionary and the intercession of the Christian party, the matter would not have been settled without bloodshed.

Other instances of a similar kind can be given.

8th. In almost all cases, the men who are taken away are the strongest and most active in their villages; and by the removal of such men a more than ordinary proportion of old and infirm people with women and children remain; which materially interferes with the raising of food, the procuring of fish, and other work necessary to the well-being of the natives.

9th. With reference to those who return, we find that those who have been oftenest and longest away are generally the worst and most dangerous characters.

10th. The whole system is, so far as we know, under no adequate supervision or control; so that the natives of these islands are at the mercy of any man who can induce or cajole or force them to take a passage on board his vessel.

In these circumstances we have no hesitation in denouncing the trade in human beings, as at present carried on among these islands, as in violation of the natural rights of man; as calculated to be injurious to the social, moral, and spiritual interests of the natives; as demoralising and degrading to the white men engaged in it; as, in short, a revival of the slave trade, without that security for the temporal well-being of those who are the subjects of it, which would be derived from the fact of their being the property of a man who had invested a large sum of money in their purchase.

Signed in behalf of the New Hebrides Mission.

J. G. PATON, *Chairman.*

JOS. COPELAND, *Clerk.*

Ancientum, N. H., 7th Sep., 1867.