

the murders on Erromanga. Whatever Mr. Geddie's sentiments may be about the *Curacao*, it is certain that he expressed himself as very much disappointed, that Commodore Seymour did nothing at Erromanga. He considered the visit as worse than useless, because nothing was done. If Mr. Geddie's sentiments are fairly represented by the *Record*, he may possibly account for this apparent contradiction, by saying, it was only Rangī, a Malay, whom he regarded as the instigator of the murder, and not the murderers themselves, whom he wished to be punished, because Rangī, being understood to be a British subject, was to be held amenable to British law. If this should be the ground taken up in the defence, and it is the most probable that I can think of, I confess that I am unable to see on what principle it could be thought right to ask the captain of a man-of-war to punish a Mohomedan, born at Singapore, but living on Erromanga, and ignorant and superstitious as any heathen, for instigating the murders, and yet count it wrong to ask him to punish two heathens, born on Erromanga for actually committing the murders; but such, if the *Record* is correct, are the sentiments held by Mr. Geddie.

We gave in Rangī's name to the Commodore, as well as those of the two murderers, with a statement of the evidence, on which Mr. Geddie and the missionaries then in the field considered him guilty. The Commodore told us, however, that in Commodore Seymour's report to the admiralty, a copy of which he had on board, it was stated, that he had examined the charges preferred against Rangī, but that on comparing the evidence for and against him, he had felt it to be his duty to acquit him; so that nothing more could be done in his case. Moreover, Mr. Gordon himself, from facts that have since come to his knowledge, is now satisfied that Rangī did not instigate the murders. Mr. Gordon, I think, has made a slight mistake, however, when he says "the Commodore expressed sympathy, but said he could not go back to 1861." At first he demurred; but finding that no action had been taken in the case of the murderers, it was only Rangī's case that he considered closed.

After the breaking up of the mission on Tanna, in 1862, a very influential deputation in Sydney, consisting of the principal friends of this mission there, waited upon the Governor, with a requisition to send down a man-of-war, to enquire into the outrages committed in the New Hebrides. I was at home at that time, but I always understood that Mr. Geddie and the other missionaries then in the field concurred with this requisition. The loss of H.M.S. *Acheron* and her gallant commander off the coast of New Zealand, and the Maori war, prevented

anything being done at that time; and the first visit of a man-of-war to this group, since 1861, was last year, when the *Esk* and *Curacao* met in Aneityum harbour.

When we came to Erromanga in the *Dayspring* in July last, we found that, a month before our arrival, a very inoffensive white man, and twelve or fourteen natives, chiefly of Fate, in the employment of the sandal wood establishment, had been barbarously murdered by the Erromangans. Mr. Gordon could hear of no specific cause or grievance alleged, as leading to the outrage; moreover the sandal wood establishment was besieged by about five hundred natives collected from all parts of the Island; a message also had been sent off to Sydney, praying for the visit of a man-of-war. We remained a few days, to afford a means of escape to the white people, if necessary: in the meantime using whatever influence we possessed in the interests of peace; and we had the satisfaction of seeing a treaty of peace concluded on board the *Dayspring*, between the representatives of the sandal wood establishment and the representatives of the belligerent natives, and also the breaking up of the war party, and their return to their respective homes. It was, however, stipulated in the treaty, that nothing that was done would prevent a man-of-war from enquiring into the late murders, and punishing those found to be guilty.

On our arrival at Aneityum, we found the *Esk* direct from Sydney, and learned that the "*Curacao*" was expected daily from Fiji. We of course reported the state of things on Erromanga. When we held our annual meeting, the question naturally came up, what action was to be taken in these matters? Here was a man-of-war sent down to visit these islands, one of its chief objects being to enquire into the murders and outrages committed on the New Hebrides, in answer to the Sydney memorial referred to above; in which as I have already said, I understood Mr. Geddie and every member of the mission then in the field to concur. Were we to stultify ourselves and our friends, by approaching the commodore and addressing him somewhat as follows: "We are very much obliged to our friends in Sydney, and very much obliged to you; no doubt you all mean very well; but we are missionaries to the heathen; we are the servants of the Prince of Peace, and we look upon it as sinful to seek either redress or protection from a man-of-war. We trust to God alone, and we can accept of no help from man?" On the contrary, as all the documents detailing the facts of the case, had been lost in the *Acheron*, we agreed unanimously to draw up a brief memorial, giving the names of the parties chiefly implicated in the more recent murders and