

make their proceedings public in Sydney. This occasioned his letter to me. I therefore felt justified in publishing it. Of course had I known that the captain was in prison here I might have placed the letter in the hands of the Attorney General. At the time of publication, the supercargo, a man named Hugo Lenninger, was committed for trial at Melbourne for murder of Tannese on board the "Young Australian" on the high seas. To this I referred in the very few lines with which I introduced Mr. Neilson's letter. I had not any idea of the captain's implication in the charge of murder, or of his being in this colony.

In the letter of Mr. Neilson he says, that of thirty natives taken from the island of Tanna and sold as labourers at Fiji, he had received information that twenty-two were taken away under stipulation to be brought back in one year, and one in one month, but they were all disposed of for three years. He adds further, that on account of the supply of ammunition there was so much fighting that "in three months and a half ten men were killed, twenty-six wounded, seven villages burned, plantations and fruit trees destroyed, canoes, pigs, fowls carried off as plunder, and a district of country six miles in length, and five in breadth, which, when I landed, contained between 800 and 1000 people, left without a house except the trading stations, (i. e. of the traders) and without an inhabitant except the white men who looked after them."

In a private letter which accompanied the one referred to, Mr. Neilson states,—"I compute that about 3000 people have been carried off from this group during the last twelve months, the vessel by which I send this letter to Brisbane has 74, and her complement is not yet complete. If the trade goes on at this rate, in ten years we will be depopulated; if it goes on at the same ratio of increase as it has done during the last three years, in five years there will not be a man left. Surely there is a loud call for the publication of facts, that the christian public and the enlightened lovers of freedom may know what is being done. Mission fields are being devastated, hopeful commerce destroyed in the bud, and a system of quasi slavery commenced."

I will be able by next mail to let you know the result of the charge against me. But, whatever it may be, I have no doubt that public attention is, by all these things, being aroused to the iniquities which are perpetrated in connection with the deportation of natives of the New Hebrides to Queensland and Fiji. I have always said that I feared the movement at Fiji, where there are no laws, no press, no British Government, more than in Queensland, and events are proving this. One of H. M. ships of war, the *Rosario*, Capt. Palmer,

captured a vessel at Fiji which was laden with natives and suspected to be guilty of kidnapping. This vessel is now in port here in charge of the authorities, and will soon be the subject of a trial.

Mr. Cosh, in his letter, says,—"I am glad to see that Government has at last taken some action in the matter which we ventured to bring before them a year ago. I hope some means may be devised for the prevention, if not of the traffic, at least of the violence and deceit that have hitherto characterized it in too many instances.—The very investigation that is now going on will have a temporary influence in restraining such outrages. No case of taking away by force has come under my notice on this island. This may partly be accounted for by the fact that the natives of this island seem infected with a kind of mania for emigration. They are, for the most, so eager to go that they require little pressing. The grand inducement is the calico and other things which they bring home with them as their wages when they return. I keep a note of the names of those who leave, together with the date of their departure, &c, so far as these are known to me at the time, and in the course of another year or two, I shall have evidence that can be relied on as to how far engagements entered into with them are kept by their employers."

I duly received your letter relative to the Insurance money, and the kind gift to Mr. Morrison. The Insurance Fund is now pretty near its consummation, and will prove of great service.

I am, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT STEEL.

REV. P. G. MCGREGOR.

Letter from Rev. D. Morrison.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, }
March 26, 1869. }

Dear Sir,—I now drop you a line previous to sailing for the New Hebrides. We came here from Sydney early this month. My own health is better now than it has been for some time past. But I fear that it may be only temporary, as the cough does not seem to be subdued. I find a change to any new place benefit me for about a fortnight; after that comes a relapse.

Mrs. M. and child have been enjoying pretty good health all along since we came to this place.

The *Dynspring* is to sail on Monday next, 29th inst. She is to have on board Mr. Inglis, Mr. Watt, and myself with our families. She is to be quite lumbered with house-frames, boats, &c.

It was proposed to detain her here for some three or four weeks for Mr. Milne