

rious practices" excite. As for using our names and inventing any stories about us which may induce natives to go on board their vessels, that is the common trick adopted by the traders. There are some—I trust very few—men sailing in these vessels who have taken a voyage in the Southern Cross, and the fact that they have been on board the mission vessel gave a plausibility to their story. In several of these islands some of our scholars are living; they speak a little English, and communicate more or less readily with any white men. Of course they use their influence to dissuade their people from going in such vessels. They know nothing about the Queensland and Fiji plantations, but they know quite enough of the character of these vessels to warn their people against going in them.

Many natives of Tanna, Vate, and of the Loyalty Islands are employed by these traders for the boating work. These men are among the most reckless and mischievous of the whole number of persons concerned in the trade. Naisilene, the Christian chief of Mare, has forbidden any native of that island to go on board any of these vessels. It would be well if white men were to follow his example.

In conclusion, I desire to protest by anticipation against any punishment being inflicted upon natives of these islands who may cut off vessels or kill boats' crews, until it is clearly shown that these acts are not done in the way of retribution for outrages first committed by white men. Only a few days ago a report reached me that a boat's crew had been killed at Espirito Santo. Nothing is more likely. I expect to hear of such things. It is the white man's fault, and it is unjust to punish the colored man for doing what, under such circumstances, he may naturally be expected to do. People say and write inconsiderately about the treachery of these islanders. I have experienced no instance of anything of the kind during fourteen years' intercourse with them; and I may fairly claim the right to be believed when I say that if the Melanesian native is treated kindly, he will reciprocate such treatment readily. The contact of many of these traders assures all the worst suspicions and passions of the wild, untaught man. It is not difficult to find an answer to the question—Who is the savage, and who is the heathen man?

Imperial legislation is required to put an end to this miserable state of things. Stringent regulations ought to be made and enforced by heavy penalties, as to the size and fittings of vessels licensed to convey natives to and from the South Sea Islands to Queensland and Fiji. All details should be specified and vigilantly carried out, as

to the number of natives that may be put on board, their food, clothing, payment, term of labour, reconveyance to their homes.

Two small men-of-war ought to cruise constantly among the islands, and especially in the neighbourhood of Queensland and Fiji, to intercept vessels bringing natives to those parts, and to examine into the observance or non-observance of the regulations.

It is manifestly to the planter's interest to discourage the lawless practices now going on in the islands.

If he wishes to have a willing, good-humoured set of men on his plantation, it is evident that they must come to him willingly, and receive from him such treatment that they will work for him cheerfully.

At present many of these islanders are brought to the plantations in an angry, sullen, revengeful state of mind. Who can wonder at it? The planter pays a heavy sum now—amounting it is said, in some cases, to £10 to £12 per head—for the so-called "passage" given to those imported labourers. I do not believe that the planters justify or desire the continuance of these proceedings in the islands. It may be that only a few persons would be found willing to come if their free consent was required; and that compulsion is necessary if labourers are to be procured at all. In this case it is not too much to say that free labourers must be sought elsewhere, among the Chinese or other people who are able to protect themselves from injustice.

But my belief is that there will be always some, not many, islanders willing to leave their homes for a time, if once it is thoroughly known by experience that they will be treated kindly and fairly, and brought home at the proper time. Curiosity, excitement, the spirit of adventure, will ever induce some men to volunteer for any employment that is not distasteful, with people who treat them honestly and fairly.

There are some two or three vessels honourably distinguished from the rest by their and generous treatment of the natives. One such vessel was at anchor for some weeks in Vanna Levu harbour. I do not I do not know its name.

Ganevierogi (the Leper Island lad) speaks of a whaler, a three-masted vessel, which was visited by some of their people. It came on to blow, and the Leper Islanders were kept on board all night, well fed, and sent ashore with presents next morning. He could not tell me the name of the vessel. But she was a whaler, and such treatment of natives is customary with such vessels.

I regret that I am unable to attend the General Synod, and that I lose the oppor-