

interim for the reception of the rest, and where they were already provided for by the Government. As to the policy of their being cooped up in a small island, serious doubts were entertained from the first, and it was confidently asserted by many, as the event has proved, that that island would shortly be their grave. But it is no part of our object on the present occasion to discuss the policy of the conduct of the Government. As we started, so we desire to close, with a bare reference to the fact that the Tasmanian natives, as a race, are now virtually extinct. There is only one man left. With whom does the blame of this rest? Most assuredly not altogether with the natives themselves. No one can say with truth that they were not as much sinned against as sinning in the disasters that befel them. But they are gone, and their extinction as a race was probably as inevitable as it is inscrutable. As savages they were found, as savages they lived, and as savages they perished! Such an event is deserving of some notice."

KIDNAPPING OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS.

THE memorial to Lord Russell, which we publish in another part of the *Intelligencer*, contains a general statement of the facts of this nefarious traffic, as well as the practical suggestions founded thereupon, which we made to his lordship. It is a duty no less than a pleasure on our part to allude to the steps taken by the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society to bring the subject before the Government. It is sufficient to say that the powerful appeal they made affords proof of their fidelity to the cause of the oppressed. Not less gratifying has it been to find that our fellow-subjects in Australia manifested a keen sense of indignation at the outrages which have been perpetrated in the South-Sea Islands, and held public meetings with a view to stimulate the Government to interfere on behalf of the unhappy natives. The thanks of the civilized world are also due to the French Consul at Tahiti, and to the naval authorities who acted in cordial co-operation with him. The timely measures they employed contributed largely to put an end to the trade in the islands under French protection, and save many of the unsophisticated inhabitants from a fate worse than death. Although it is impossible that we can find space for the mass of facts which have reached us, it is desirable that we should put on record such of them as appear to possess the greatest importance.

It appears that one house alone engaged to furnish ten thousand South-Sea Islanders for the mines and guano islands of Peru, the traffic in Coolies having been stopped. The position occupied by the wretched emigrants on their arrival at their destination was, as we shewed in our memorial, the most miserable that can well be conceived. We shall now proceed to prove that the means by which they were entrapped were no less shameful and wicked. For example, the Rev. H. Nisbet, writing from Upolo, says of an island not far from his station:—

"Atahu presented a fine spectacle—a chapel; two teachers' houses; the people diligently attending to schools and the ordinances of religion; many of both old and young able to read quite nicely, &c. But the sad sequel has to

be told. You may have heard that there are a large number of vessels in these seas from South America, with the intention of taking 10,000 of our Polynesians to the mines of Peru. That, you see, is a new phase in this awful villany. We had one of them off our coasts for some days. The man who professed to be supercargo offered foreigners 10 dollars a head for all natives they could persuade to go on board. Well, they have visited Tokelau; and Maka (a Raratongan preacher) has just written to say that one vessel has taken away all the male adults of Atahu at a single sweep. They enticed them on board under pretext of trading, and spread some attractive property out between decks. Having got them down there, they shut them in, of course. The chief, who was on deck, and saw the suspicious movement, went to the hatch to call the people to come up, but was tripped over against them, and so put among the captives. It seems another vessel came and took away the remaining two men by force, so that only women and children are left. It is reported that they have been doing the same at Nukunono and Fakaofa, and all the low islands to the east. Similar testimony is borne by the Rev. H. Gee, Apia. He states that nearly all the men of Tokelau have been taken away, and the mission destroyed. That the poor people of Fakaofa were assembled in front of the teacher's house, and more than forty picked out and driven to the vessels by men armed with guns and swords. He says that the brother of the chief of Fakaofa and another native told him that only seven men were left, and that there were 300 natives of different islands on board one vessel, which was considered by no mean full."

A more detailed narrative of the outrages committed by these pirates is contained in an affecting letter written by Samuela, a native convert and teacher residing at Savage Island. It will be seen, that while in some cases the cruel speculators were content to seduce their unhappy victims into signing the pseudo contracts by specious promises of abundant food, good wages, and kind treatment, in the land to which they are to be conveyed; in others they resorted to the worst treachery and violence. Samuela writes as follows:—

“ *Niue (or Savage Island), March 31, 1863.*

“ MR. ELLA AND MR. MURRAY,—This is my account to you of the work of God on Niue, of what is being done by us the teachers, and Mr. Lawes the Missionary. Great is our love to you from whom we are now separated. Although we are so widely apart, and cannot see each other's faces, let us continue to meet and feel each other's presence, in our united prayers to Jehovah our God. Pray for us, that our work may be blessed and progress in peace, for there are many evils springing up in the world to hinder the work of the Lord, by wicked men from strange lands.”

[Samuela then relates proceedings in the Mission of a most cheering character, but too long to mention here. After this, he narrates the calamities which have come upon them.]

“ But other things I have to tell you which have produced many sorrows among this people. Foreign ships of men-stealers have brought distress to this land of Niue. On the 28th of January a ship came off here, said to be a ship of Spain. I do not know whether this is true, or whether we were deceived also in this. The captain said they had come to purchase fowls and pigs. Then our people unsuspectingly went off with their things to sell. When the captain saw that there was a good number of men on board, he made sail, carrying off forty of the people, and moved out of sight of land. Then he fastened the people down in the hold, and went round to the other side of the island to steal more men. There other natives in their simplicity

went off to the ship to sell. When the men who were fastened down below heard some of their people on deck, they called out to them to help them out of their confinement. Then seven managed to burst from their prison, and the canoes hastened to the shore with these seven men. They were fired upon from the ship. One man was wounded in the neck, and nearly killed: he is still confined with his wound. Another man was hacked by a hatchet: his hand is badly cut with one of the strokes. All the canoes reached the shore with these seven, but the ship went off, carrying away thirty-three: among them there were twelve church members and six candidates. Great was the lamentation of the people here, because their friends were taken away, for the chiefs and rulers of the land are stolen in that man-stealing ship. To this day their wives and children continue to weep and mourn: some have nine, some six, others five, and others four children, thus bereaved. This grief is not confined to this people: we all sympathize too with those of other lands who are also made slaves by these foreigners. I only tell you these things, for what means have we of ever again getting these men? Alas for them! where are they?

“After this event, another thing of the same kind took place. On the 9th of March, another vessel stood off this place. Mr. Lawes sent off a letter to the ship to inquire where she was bound, but he did not suspect that this also was a slave ship. A small four-seated canoe went off to the vessel to take Mr. Lawes' letter. Then the ship's boat came to shore; but the men who went off with the letter were kept bound on board: they and their canoe were hoisted on board. When the ship's boat came to the shore, only one of the foreigners landed; but the boat kept off at a distance at sea. This foreigner deceived us. He went up to Mr. Lawes, pretending to get medicine for the captain of the ship. The foreigners returned, attended by a number of the people, who took him off to the boat. Some canoes also went out to get the men who had gone off to the ship. [The suspicions of the people had been aroused by the four men who took the letter not returning.] Behold, when the boat reached the ship, the ship fired into the nine canoes which went off for the men who were detained on board, and one man, a church member, was hit: the bullet entered his eye, and he fell dead. The ship continued firing upon them, and some of the canoes were broken up, and whilst the people were swimming, the boats pursued the men, seized them, and dragged them off to the ship. Then the vessel sailed away with nineteen of the people: one also was killed. There were among those taken by the slave ship, three teachers and a deacon of Mr. Lawes's church, and other church members, and some candidates. A great many children are thus bereaved. The wives and children cease not to weep for their husbands and fathers, not knowing whether they were killed, or where they are taken by these men-stealing ships. It is as if the work of God would be hated here, for some of the people think that these calamities have come upon them, and foreigners have visited them from having Missionaries and teachers living among them; for such things never occurred in former days of heathenism. But these are only words which are uttered in the bitterness of their grief and astonishment on account of the cruelty of foreigners in these days. Their people have been killed and carried off, and they have done nothing to cause such afflictions. Has any foreigner been killed on Niue? No, indeed. Lo, it is a day of mourning that these doings have brought upon this people. They now weep and mourn for their husbands, their chiefs, and their young men, who are stolen by foreign ships. This is the difficulty with us: we do not know from what country the ships have come, we do not know the names of the ships, nor the names of the captains. But I just tell you these things which have occurred in this land.

“The young men, Mose, and Sualo, and Noa, who came with Mr. Murray from Samoa, are all taken by these men-stealing ships of the foreigners.

There wives and parents do nothing but cry for them. Mose has left two children, the same also Sualo, but Noa had only one child. Great is my compassion for these young men, who were so earnest in the work of God, and who were such helps to me. I cannot finish this letter with more: the ship is going off. Peace to you all.—I am, “SAMUELA.”

We could, if necessary, multiply extracts of this description, but these will convey to our readers a sufficiently definite idea of the mode in which the new slave traffic was being carried on. Every one will admit, that in our memorial we did not characterize the trade in terms of too great severity. We have alluded to the admirable conduct of the French authorities at Tahiti. The most notable example of the justice of this eulogy occurred in the case of the “*Mercedes Ulholy*,” the particulars of which are thus condensed by a contemporary:—

“The proceedings of the French Criminal Tribunal at Tahiti, in the case of the Peruvian brig the *Mercedes Ulholy* are full of interest on many grounds. The official journal of the French establishments in Oceanica—the *Messenger de Taiti*—reports the trial at great length.

“According to the French laws prevailing within the limits of the protectorate of the Polynesian seas, no foreign vessels are allowed to enter the waters of the islands, or to take cargo from them, without the authorisation of the Imperial authorities at Tahiti. But at the last moment, when the *Mercedes* was on the point of leaving Callao, the owner strictly forbade the visit of the ship to that island, and manifested an extreme anxiety on the subject. Such was the allegation made in his defence by Knapp, one of the defendant's tried at Papeete, and corroborated by witnesses. The *Mercedes* proceeded accordingly, not to Tahiti, but to Faarava, Moatutu, and other islands. At one of these places she took on board a Frenchman named Grandet, who had long been a resident on the islands, and who engaged himself, on certain liberal terms, to procure Indians to embark. An interview was had with some chiefs, who signed contracts on the part of the natives. Payments of money were promised, and other enticing inducements held out, and upwards of 150 Indians were induced to embark. Some, however, including chiefs, went on board, intending to accompany the ship only a little way along the coast, and then to return. They were, however, detained as prisoners, on the ground that they had eaten of the ship's food. Before the *Mercedes* had got out of the waters of the islands she was overhauled by a French war steamer—the *Latouche Treville*; her papers were demanded, and these not proving satisfactory, she was seized, and the agent (Grandet), and the captain (Unibaso), and the pilot (interpreter) (Knapp), were conveyed to Tahiti to undergo their trial. They were all committed, only Grandet died in hospital before the Criminal Tribunal opened its session. Unibaso and Knapp were convicted, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment (five and ten years) with hard labour, and heavy pecuniary damages.”

The defence of the prisoners rested mainly upon the Government licence which their employer had obtained from the authorities, on representing to them that the Chinch Islands needed an additional supply of labourers, and that he had been unable to obtain them in Peru. The licence was couched in the following terms:—

“Lima, Sept. 16, 1862.

“Permission is granted to the memorialist to introduce colonists from the

Oceanic Islands, on condition that he shall submit to the provisions of the law of the 14th of May last, No. 281-62. “(Signed)

MORALES.”

This document clearly established the connection of the Peruvian Government with the traffic. The following extract from the examination of the accused will be read with interest, containing as it does some startling admissions with reference to the condition of the labourers in the Chincha Islands.

“The President inquired of the accused, Unibaso, whether he was aware that the natives were destined for the Chincha Islands.

“The accused denied all knowledge of it.

“This document having been surrendered by the American and read in court,

“The President of the Court (addressing himself to the prisoner Unibaso) said, ‘Unibaso, stand up. It is needless to ask you whether you know this license?’

“Unibaso—‘I do know it. I did not know that the colonists (!) were destined for the Chincha Islands. As the license is endorsed I did not know whether they were to be sent to the Chinchas or to country estates (*haciendas*).’

“The President—‘Why did you not tell the Paumotuans that they were to be employed in the guano work?’

“Unibaso—‘I did not know that they would be so employed. It was for the owner of the ship to give to the colonists that destination which appeared to him best.’

“President—‘A most charming picture of the future was presented to these Indians: they were given glimpses, as it were, of a paradise before them, when it was degrading labour (*un travail ignoble*) for which they were destined.’

“Unibaso—‘I never had orders about it from the owners.’

“President—‘In whose hands was this licence on board?’

“Unibaso—‘It was in my possession.’

“The President, to Lee Knapp—‘You know this licence; the captain has shewn it to you?’

“Lee Knapp—‘I do not know it. The captain one day, at the door of his cabin, partially unfolded it before me, but I did not make myself acquainted with its contents.’

“The President, to Unibaso—‘Have you shewn that licence to Lee Knapp?’

“Unibaso—‘No; I thought he was acquainted with the contents of it, since he had received orders from the owner.’

“The witness Reilly is recalled.

“The President, to Reilly—‘Remember that you have sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Did you know that the Indians were destined for the Chincha Islands?’

“The witness Reilly—‘I had some suspicion of it, which became afterwards a certainty. The former contractor for the Chincha Islands, Domingo Elias, having finished his contract, had taken away all his plant: the present contractor, not finding a sufficient supply of Chinese, was obliged to employ free labourers, which put him to a considerable expense, and hindered him from meeting the demand for cargoes of guano. Monsieur Wholey had already employed agents to collect free labourers. When he decided on sending out the *Mercedes*, I thought that the labourers from here (from Polynesia) were for the Chinchas. Moreover, whilst I was in the Paumotus, at the end of the conversations (*discussions*) between the captain and Lee Knapp, that party

said to me, 'These Indians are sufficiently unfortunate in being destined to be sent to the Chinchas, so that they ought to be well used on board,' (*sont assez malheureux d'être envoyés aux îles Chinchas pour qu'ils soient bien traités à bord*).

"President—'How many years have you been a resident in Peru?'

"Witness—'For the last twelve years.'

"President—'I observe that you speak at times of "free labourers;" are there, then, labourers who are slaves?'

"Witness—'I was alluding to the Chinese voluntarily bound servants (*engagés*) working at the rate of five piastres a month. They are given a little rice to live upon.'

"President—'Give us some details of the treatment of these labourers.'

"Witness Reilly—'I kept a restaurant at the Chinchas for a year. That guano business is a horrible sort of work (*un affreux travail*). They bury the Chinese, and sometimes disinter the bodies eight or ten days afterwards, when they have occasion to dig where the bodies have been placed. They are always given rice of the worst quality for their food. I can speak positively to all this, having been myself an eyewitness. They are very much ill-used—absolutely like slaves.'

"President—'Is there no representative of the Peruvian government at the Chinchas?'

"Witness—'There is a governor on the island, but I do not know whether he concerns himself to prevent the ill-treatment of which I speak. I do not know even that he has the right of doing so. What I am very certain of is, that matters there are just as I have stated them to be.'

"President—'What are the punishments that are inflicted on these labourers?'

"Witness—'They are flogged and heavily ironed. (*On leur donne le fouet, on leur met des fers aux pieds et au cou*)'.

"The President (to Mr. Orsmond, the interpreter)—'Translate the deposition of the witness Reilly to the natives of the Paumotus now present in the court.'

"Mr. Orsmond replied in Tahitian what had just been said.

"There was a profound sensation of astonishment amongst the natives when they heard what had been said."

Well might the poor natives be "astonished" when they heard the fate which awaited their kidnapped countrymen in Peru. Astonished we, alas! cannot feel, when we know what crimes are committed by so-called civilized men, even in the name of civilization. The story is a very old one, and contains many chapters. Peru itself was once enslaved, as the Peruvians are now enslaving the South-sea islanders. Thus is wrong perpetrated and reproduced, and the cup of human suffering made full to overflowing by the cupidity of guilty men.

MEMORIAL TO EARL RUSSELL.

THE Committee of the Society addressed the following Memorial to the Foreign Secretary :—

To the Right Hon. EARL RUSSELL, K.G., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

WE earnestly desire to call your Lordship's attention to the new

"KIDNAPPING OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS." Annual Report of the British & Foreign
Aborigines' Protection Society, 1 Jan. 1863, pp. 393+. Nineteenth Century UK
Periodicals, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/CC1903215107/NCUK?u=slv&sid=bookmark-
NCUK](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CC1903215107/NCUK?u=slv&sid=bookmark-NCUK). Accessed 31 Mar. 2023.