

we push our trade we should have some legal machinery for protecting our interests. In the South Seas this machinery is at present a most imperfect one. In some parts of the islands, indeed, it does not exist. We may go farther and say that the protection to life and property is smaller in some parts of the South Seas than it used to be. In a general way it is the business of the High Commissioner to protect the natives against outrages from the whites, and also to see that the whites are protected from outrages by the natives. But events have shown that even the first of these functions has been very imperfectly carried out, and in too many instances the second has been found to be inconvenient or impossible. A year or two since we had to report the cases of several whites who were in custody on the charge of having perpetrated crimes in the islands, but who had to be liberated because the Court before which they were brought had no jurisdiction. British subjects have in too many instances had to take the law in their own hands or to place themselves at the mercy of lawless savages. Formerly it was understood that it was the business of Her Majesty's ships of war to be travelling police stations, and it may be that they are still looked upon in this light; but by the authorities at Home any such action on the part of Her Majesty's ships is regarded with grave suspicion. Last year the First Lord of the Admiralty, although declining to censure a lieutenant who tried and hanged a native for murdering a British subject, expressed his regret that such a procedure had been resorted to. An English journal, commenting on this matter at the time, remarked that there could be no greater error in policy than to convert Her Majesty's ships into travelling police stations, with power by a drum-head Court-Martial to condemn the natives of the Pacific Islands to death.

It will thus be seen that not only is there no machinery of justice for British subjects in many parts of the islands, but that there is extreme unwillingness to sanction the only machinery that can be sent there. What, then, is to be done? We all remember the outcry that was made a year or two since when a missionary at New Britain, in the absence of the protection of the law, became his own protector; and the outcry was not an unnatural one. The authorities have found that the action of the missionary concerned was not unjustifiable under the circumstances; but we should none of us like to see a sort of Lynch law set up in the islands either by missionaries or by traders. It is evident, however, that unless British subjects who trade with, or reside at, some parts of the islands, protect themselves, they must remain without protection. This is not a satisfactory state of things. Such British subjects as Captain Ferguson are not invaders, for the stations at which they trade are usually formed with the consent of the natives. They have, therefore, a right to judicial protection against the excesses of the islanders, as the islanders have against their excesses. As matters stand at present there is insufficient protection on either side, and neither the Home authorities nor the authorities of the colonies are greatly concerned about increasing it. In a recent debate in the House of Commons strong words were spoken against supposed severities inflicted by British subjects on the natives of barbarous countries, but nothing was said as to the necessity of the Imperial Government doing something to take this responsibility out of their hands. In England politicians have too much to do to allow of their concerning themselves very greatly about what may become of British subjects in the South Seas. This is one of the matters on which the English Press maintains a studied indifference. Colonial Governments have not begun to consider it a part of their duty to protect the traders of the South Seas; but the subject is one which they might conveniently consider, and which they might press upon the attention of the authorities in Downing-street.

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It is gratifying to learn that the naval authorities have awakened to the demand for retribution against the Solomon Island savages who committed the atrocious outrage on the commander of the "Sandfly" and his boat's crew. It appears that H.M.S. "Emerald" is to be despatched immediately for the scene of the outrage, with orders to make an example of the guilty islanders. We must confess to a sentiment of hope that the captain of the "Emerald" will not neglect to fulfil his instructions to the letter. There are many people who regard these Polynesians much as mere children, and who are ever ready to produce excuses for the most cunning and cruel murders committed by the islanders. The point is, however, as to how the Pacific islands are to be made available for civilized man if crimes such as the last one committed by the Solomon Islanders are allowed to go unpunished. Gentle means have been tried, and have signally failed. The only course now open is to bring the teaching of fire and sword to bear upon the minds of the barbarians. Moral suasion and rosewater arguments have clearly no application here, and the sooner the Imperial Government come to appreciate this feature of the situation the better for the advancement of civilization in the Pacific. Adventurous Englishmen are bound to find their way to the various archipelagos that besprinkle this ocean. If they are not efficiently protected against the savagery of the aborigines, in the end it will be the old story of innumerable cruel murders and the staving-off of utilization of these oceanic patches of fertile soil to some remote date.

[Extract from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 4th December, 1880.]

It is assuredly not too soon for the "Emerald" to be moving towards the Solomon Islands. The cruiser "Beagle" has brought intelligence of another massacre by the inhuman inhabitants of this archipelago. Captain Murray, of the schooner "Loelia," two white men, and a native, on this occasion, were the victims. The necessity for inflicting severe chastisement on these savages is now too obviously imperative to need further enforcement. The only question to be considered is as to what punishment would be condign in the circumstances. Clearly the old programme of shelling a few forsaken villages must be discarded. The savages must be hunted down somewhat, and made to feel that British reprisals do not always consist in quasi-pyrotechnic displays. The shelling of villages customarily involves merely the destruction of a few miserable habitations that can be rebuilt in a day, and the excitement of some evanescent emotions of terror in the minds of the savages who witness the process from afar off. This method of dealing out sharp justice to the Solomon Islanders must on this occasion be abandoned; else