

there will be no end to the horrors of which we are constantly hearing. The course that the captain of the "Emerald" is called upon to pursue certainly does not form part of a civilized programme, and no doubt that gallant officer would fain be relieved of the unpleasant duty that is thrust upon him, for it is nothing less than the execution of the *lex talionis* to the very letter. Our people have been cruelly and relentlessly massacred, and the Solomon Islanders must be dealt with in like fashion. All ideas founded on Exeter-Hallism must be thrown to the winds. If they are not, the "Emerald" might as well remain at Farm Cove. The crew of the "Sandfly" will for the time being join the "Emerald," and they will be in a position to recognize and point out the offending tribes. In this way the uncomfortable impression will be removed that the innocent are being punished for the guilty. Those who are responsible for the massacre will be made to pay the penalty, and their punishment, it is to be hoped, will be such as to deter other savages from similar acts.

[Extract from the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, 6th December, 1880.]

WE wonder what the authorities in England will think of the conduct of the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, and of the Commodore of the naval squadron in these seas, when they hear of the savage atrocities that have been committed by the natives of several of the islands in the South Seas during the past few months, without any attempt having been made to interfere for the protection of the lives of her Majesty's subjects. If the Imperial Government is not thoroughly demoralized by the cant of Exeter Hall, these officials with high-sounding titles, whose neglect of duty is so painfully apparent, should hear something, if not to their advantage, at all events to the advantage of those whose lives are at the mercy of their interesting *protégés*. There have been some seven or eight massacres within the last three or four months, and we have not heard that the slightest effort has been made to check the series of slaughters. No remonstrance has been made with any of the chiefs of the cannibal islands, and not even a missionary has been sent to convert these people from the error of their ways. The High Commissioner might just as well have been in London with his friends at Court, or at Timbuctoo, as at Fiji or New Zealand. This gentleman, who has been recently appointed Governor of New Zealand, has taken the natives of the South Sea Islands under his special protection, so that the whites find their colour to be a disadvantage. The gravest complaints have been made in Fiji of the effect of the policy of the High Commissioner, who is virtually dictator in these islands. The results of that policy we have seen in the repeated murders that have taken place, without apparently any provocation having been given. The impunity with which the treacherous savages of the South Seas have committed atrocities has of course had the effect of increasing their audacity. They evidently think either that the British Government is careless of the lives of its subjects or is powerless to punish. A few weeks ago a message appeared in the Sydney papers, purporting to emanate from Hailey, the chief of the island Coolangbangara, describing in exulting terms the massacre of the crew of the "Esperanza." The shrewd savage laughed at the idea of his being punished for what he had done by a man-of-war, which only fired big guns, made a great noise, and smashed cocoanut-trees. He recounted all the vessels that had been taken and their crews murdered, and yet no one punished; and why, he asks, should he be punished? Whitefellow was, in his opinion, only like a woman as far as fighting went, and he wished the man-of-war to come so that he could get more heads. This miscreant's boasting is the practical commentary upon the British policy in the South Seas as exhibited by Sir Arthur Gordon and the Commodore of the squadron. A man-of-war did go to one of the Solomon Islands—the unfortunate "Sandfly"—and the boast of Hailey was realized. More men were murdered, and more heads taken to hang up alongside of those that had already been obtained. The "Sandfly," forsooth, was among the islands surveying, as if among peaceable islanders, instead of among the murderers of so many white men.

The particulars of the horrible massacre of the crew of the "Esperanza" appeared in the Sydney papers two months ago; and what has been done to teach Hailey and those like him that white men are not to be murdered with impunity? Positively nothing. We would have thought that this massacre, and the insolent defiance of the chief who could be identified, would have induced some action on the part of the High Commissioner or Commodore Wilson, even if they thought the previous atrocities unworthy of their serious notice. Yet, so far as the public are aware, the news of this massacre, like that of those which preceded it, was received with perfect indifference. The "Wolverene" and three or four other vessels of the squadron of course put in an appearance in Hobson's Bay, and the crews took part in the formalities of the Exhibition opening on the 2nd of October. Their participation in these idle pageants, when they should have been doing their best to preserve the lives of their fellow-subjects at the islands, was bad enough; but what are we to think of their subsequent proceedings, after the news of the "Esperanza" tragedy had been received, and the taunting message of Chief Hailey had been made public? Why, the Commodore takes his vessel off to Adelaide! What did he mean by turning his ship's bow to the west, when he should have gone to the east? Recent telegrams have kept us informed of the gallant uses to which the officers and crew of the "Wolverene" have been put in Adelaide. The officers have been attending balls at Government House, and they and the crew have been playing in cricket matches! Here are nomad heroes with a vengeance, deliberately forsaking their plain duty and leaving their countrymen to be murdered at the Solomon Islands. That these last murders of the captain and several of the crew of the "Sandfly" would have been averted if the High Commissioner and Commodore Wilson had done their duty in the case of the "Esperanza" and the other vessels whose crews were massacred is plain enough. What that inflated gentleman who is dubbed High Commissioner was doing we do not know, but we know how the Commodore and his crew were employing their time. What the "Emerald" and the other vessels of the squadron have been doing we do not know. For some time recently the "Emerald" has been lying snugly in Farm Cove, and now the "Cormorant" has come in to follow suit. We do not grudge the officers and men of these vessels a well-earned leisure; but what on earth do they mean idling their time here when the blood of British subjects cries up from the ground at the Solomon Islands, and every new arrival brings us intelligence of fresh atrocities? The people of Great Britain pay a heavy bill for their navy, and this is how that portion of it in the South Seas earns its wages. When these matters come under the notice of the House of Commons, as of course they will in due course, strict account will be required of the conduct of those concerned.