

should valuable lives be endangered through the abuse of this infernal traffic in human flesh? Stay! I may be told such things are not possible, the thing generously guarded from abuse by Act of Parliament. Greater the reproach to us that an Act of Parliament is necessary to do so. I believe that none but those who are directly interested in this cursed traffic can for one moment conceive the terrible abuses that are perpetrated, and the subterfuges adopted to deceive and wrong these unfortunate islanders. I do not say that they are angels in all their transactions with others. I think the same may be safely said of those who have traded with them. They are no better than the class of white men they have had to deal with has made them; they have been treated and dealt with as savages, as beasts of the field, and they have been only true to nature. Nothing belonging to them has been held sacred; on every opportunity their wives have been violated and abused. The account of Savage, the hero of the day, goes to confirm the above, that their women were guarded with jealous care. From New Guinea we have a confirming report, that it is almost impossible to induce the natives of these isles to leave by fair means. At the present time the mate and charterer of a vessel just returned from a labour cruise are under charge for malpractice in connection with this revolting traffic in human flesh. I can hear some say they are only niggers, and are not fit to be at large, save as slaves. That idea is exploded. We need not leave the islands of the Pacific to find facts to rebut this. Since writing the above I learn that a man-of-war is to be despatched to these unfortunate islands to wreak vengeance on those benighted savages; and this is just what, in your wisdom, you desired should take place. I cannot agree with you that it will have the effect of accomplishing what you desire, while black-birding is made lawful by the British nation, and she allows vessels to carry slaves in the Pacific Ocean, flying the Union Jack, whilst on the coast of Africa and the Indian Ocean the same flag boasts of being a terror to slave-traders. This is why the British flag has lost its respect with the savages of the isles of the Pacific. It will scarcely be necessary to make out a case to go through the long list of massacres on both sides, from the atrocious brig "Carl" butchery. It makes one's blood curdle to think that men go there in the guise of bishops to enable them to accomplish their villainous purpose for the sake of lucre. I do not say that the foregoing will supply a full justification on behalf of the islanders for committing the late disastrous outrage, but I think it has furnished a means whereby they have been educated up to their present unenviable notoriety. Noble lives have already been sacrificed, and will continue to be so while things are *in statu quo*. I have no doubt but that retribution will be dealt out unsparingly by the shipmates of those unfortunate men; but I question whether it will make the natives any more friendly, once they have received their chastisement. This, Sir, is our boasted civilization in a land where men and women read and pray.

Illawarra, December 6th.

Yours, &c.,

J.G.K.

[Extract from the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, 9th December, 1880.]

IN our issue of yesterday appeared a letter signed "J.G.K.," in reference to the recent massacre at the Solomon Islands, the writer of which is evidently a strong sympathizer with those interesting savages who treacherously attack their victims, mutilate their bodies, and eat portions of them. He thinks that the "cursed labour traffic" is at the bottom of these massacres, which are committed in retaliation for the forcible abduction of the natives and interference with the women. He adduces no proof whatever of his statements, but is clearly under the impression that the abuses of several years ago are the causes of the atrocities committed by the Solomon Islanders now! An article in another column gives us the experience and the opinions of Captain Woodhouse, of the schooner "Ripple," on this subject. He states that since the Labour Act was passed six or seven years ago the unlawful trade that was then carried on has ceased. So far from the natives of the Solomon Islands having any distrust of the British flag, they show the utmost confidence in its protecting power for themselves, for they venture on board English vessels without any hesitation. The Rev. Mr. A. W. Murray states that the British flag is held in higher respect than that of any other nation, because of the confidence that is felt by the natives in British justice and fair consideration. It is very clear then that it cannot be true that the abuses of the labour traffic have so exasperated the natives that they commit these murders in retaliation, for they would naturally take care not to trust themselves on board British vessels, and they would hardly respect a flag associated with such disgraceful practices as are referred to by "J.G.K." The latter, misquoting some of our remarks, states that the abominable practice of slave-stealing is the cause of the British flag being "reviled" and hated by the natives. He quite misunderstands us. What we said was that the British flag had ceased to command the same respect as the flags of other nations, because the natives found that they could commit crimes with impunity upon British subjects. In fact, under the *régime* of Sir Arthur Gordon things are quite reversed. The white man is rigorously punished for any wrongdoing to the brown man, but the latter is never punished at all, no matter what he does. If the white man attempts to resent any action of the natives he knows he will be called to strict account, and even if he defends his life he is running a risk of putting his head into the halter. The British flag may be regarded with "respect" in the sense in which Mr. Murray uses the word, although "J.G.K." thinks differently, but it is not the respect with which any fear is mingled. It is now the flag which invites attack, because no punishment follows. The unfortunates who sail under it are practically in the position of men whose hands are tied behind them, because some of their countrymen have put their hands to a bad use. Our correspondent says we are "desirous of wreaking vengeance upon these benighted islanders." If he means by this that we wish to see the perpetrators of the murders brought to punishment, and hung up as a warning and terror to other savages, then he is right. But this is no more vengeance than hanging Scott or Ned Kelly was. The suggestion that these savages are so benighted that they are not murderers in the ordinary sense is ridiculous. They are perfectly well aware of the crimes they have committed, and of the penalty which white men exact for them, and any plea of ignorance is absurd. If they have had any provocation or were first attacked the case would be different. A judicious officer will take care not to act until he knows for certain that there is no mistake. Let the guilty be punished when their guilt is clearly established. We hope there is nobody prepared to waste any sympathy upon these murderers, though nothing should surprise us after the exhibition in Melbourne in favour of reprieving Ned Kelly.