

shots after them. I gave the gun then to one of my boys, who also fired, while I got up sail and got away.’”

“Wednesday, 8th September.—Dick, the London Missionary Society teacher here, came to me and reported: ‘Last night I received word from the old chief on Basilisk Island, near Goodman Point, who is a true friend of the white man, that there is some talk of doing something to Whitten, of the cutter “Albatross,” and his fellows, but that he, the chief, is keeping a good look-out. My son was last week on the “Dart” as interpreter. Captain Field landed about this same place to take the sun. My boy overheard them, as he believes, talking about “doing something” to Captain Field. Then the old man—the chief referred to above—said, “Why, what you going to do that for? Don’t you see son of missionary in boat?” The other men then ashamed, and all ran away.’ Dick further tells me: ‘I hear the natives of Milne Gulf, Basilaki, and other islands who come here talking among themselves, “No more frightened man-of-war; man-of-war never pay; Fryer no pay; Fryer’s mate, he no pay; St. Aignan, he cut man-of-war captain; he no pay; man-of-war, he no pay no more.” They think, Mr. Forbes, the man-of-war no come no more: and round about them islands it now no more safe.’”

How far these statements of the teacher may be imaginative or exaggerated it is difficult to tell, but there is not a little truth at bottom, and, taken with what I have recorded above, I believe they are not unworthy of serious consideration. From this state of unquiet and hostility in the Louisiades it will be evident that your Excellency’s representative can but imperfectly profit by the opportunities at his command. Landing from a vessel like the “Coral Sea,” without a protecting company, can be accomplished at very few of these interesting and little-known islands, and no exploration or examination of the ultra-shore land can be even attempted at any of them. I hear of what appear to be valuable mineral veins in St. Aignan, and of gums from other islands, which I am most anxious to examine, but it can be done, under present circumstances, only in the face of your Excellency’s fatherly caution, for the risks are undeniably great. The dangers would be vastly minimised by the presence of a vessel of war on the station.

On the arrival of H.M.S. “Harrier” on the 14th, I intend, unless I hear of your Excellency’s, or of a man-of-war’s, early arrival, to proceed to the Louisiades about the 18th instant, and may probably be absent about a month or six weeks.

I have, &c.,

HENRY O. FORBES.

PS. October 12th, 1886.—Since writing the above a great delay has taken place in obtaining an opportunity for despatch of our mails. Messrs. Kissack and Thompson have this morning announced their intention of sending the “Pioneer” to Cooktown to-morrow morning; so I have hastily to add this postscript.

H.M.S. “Harrier” did not arrive with the mail until the 24th of September, and only then *en route* for the Solomon Islands. Before her arrival Dinner Island became nightly infested with natives from the surrounding islands fully armed, prowling about in quest of some of the people here. As yet none of the moonlighters have been captured or killed, though they have been both fired upon and attacked at close quarters: and none of the Dinner Islanders have been harmed. A guard has had to be kept nightly for several weeks now.

Immediately on the departure of the “Harrier,” and just as I was ready to leave for the Louisiades, a report was brought me from Teste Island of a plot to murder the London Missionary Society teacher there. (Later intelligence shows that they have not carried out their intentions, if really formed.) As, after Lydia Island, Teste Island was one of the islands I specially intended to examine, I desired, considering the disaffection existing all round, to defer my visit to the Louisiades till the arrival of H.M.S. “Diamond,” which will arrive here, as I am informed by the “Harrier,” about the end of this month. Even had the state of the natives not caused me to change my plans, it became impossible for me to leave owing to an attack of dysentery and fever, accompanied by an aggravated relapse of inflammation of the ear, from which I am only now just recovering.

I have to report to your Excellency the sad news brought to-day from the Louisiades (whither the “Coral Sea” proceeded a week ago to return the native Bari, sent by your Excellency to me, to his home at Low Woody Island, close to Joannet Island) by Captain Mullens, of the “Alice Meade,” of the murder of J. A. Craig, master of the ketch “Emily,” together with the three Europeans and the five Malays composing his crew. Full particulars are wanting, but it would appear that they were fallen upon at the critical moment of one of the divers emerging from the water, when no one was prepared. The vessel was entirely looted of goods, stores, and weapons, and then completely burned. One boat has been brought here by Mullens, who visited the scene of the murder a few days since—namely, Joannet Island. The 14th September last appears to be about the date of the murders.

This news only serves to confirm more fully the reports and suspicions of native disaffection which I have recorded in the earlier part of this letter.

I have to report to your Excellency that almost all the vessels coming to this portion of New Guinea commit a breach of the regulations which declare Port Moresby the sole port of entry and clearance for the Protectorate waters, as they not only refrain from going to Port Moresby, but they fail to call here. Their calling at one or the other port is the only protection the Queensland Government has against the stores shipped out of bond being distributed illegally to ships along the Barrier Reef, and the Protectorate of checking the illicit landing of prohibited articles and of preventing the in-bringing of infectious diseases.

I have to report that a Chinaman, Ah Gim, a bêche-de-mer collector, who held a Protectorate permit from Sir Peter Scratchley, has lost that document: I have refused to give him a new one till after referring the matter to your Excellency, under the following circumstances: Being known to the Customs authorities at Cooktown as the holder of a permit, and having a Queensland master’s certificate, he cleared as master in the schooner “Pride of the Logan,” from Cooktown, for Dinner Island. He arrived here with his bonded stores broached, and declared that the portion not on