

6. The labourers had been brought, in the first instance, from the Line Islands to Samoa, in the "Flirt," for Mr. Cornwall, but it has not yet been possible to obtain the information wished for regarding the "Flirt's" voyage. The treatment of these labourers in Samoa was, in some respects, so shocking that it is singular the Acting-Consul cannot furnish the information required regarding the voyage of the "Flirt," upon the circumstances connected with which suspicion must rest.

7. From the time of the arrival of the labourers at Lata, their food was insufficient and unsuitable. The water supplied to them was insufficient, disgusting, and deleterious in quality. They were brutally treated: the manager could not tell how many he had flogged. One sick woman was, as a punishment and example, carried on a pole, to which she was tied hanging by the hands and feet like a dead pig, and the same night she was publicly flogged, so cruelly that the wounds in her back required to be dressed. She died some weeks afterwards: her wretched child had died in an attempt the persecuted mother made to escape, before the one for which she was so brutally treated. So many persons died under this system, that the manager either made false statements to conceal the number, or could not remember how many had sunk. Generally, it may be said that 130 coloured labourers were kept for five months on the estate of an acting-consul, upon miserably bad and insufficient food—that the water also was insufficient in quantity and filthy in quality—that men and women were alike cruelly flogged at the caprice of the manager—that no account can be given of the number so flogged. They were not allowed to go to church on Sunday: indeed, the survivors state that they were compelled to work on that day; and that their average of daily labour was within a few minutes of ten hours.* Under this system, in five months, twenty-one of these labourers out of the 130 died.

8. It is impossible to read without being deeply moved by them, the sad statements of cruelty made in these papers. And this feeling is increased upon general grounds, as from these revelations it is almost certain that similar transactions must be daily taking place in many parts of the Pacific, whilst in this particular case indignation is increased by the knowledge that (if I am right in assuming that Mr. Cornwall was the British Acting-Consul) these transactions took place, as it were, under the British flag.

9. In despatches written thirty-one years ago, especially in one written on the 14th March, 1841, I pointed out to Her Majesty's Government that transactions such as are now under consideration would occur. I especially called attention to the species of trade in the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands which was certain to spring up; and I suggested that a remedy should be at once applied, by the acquisition of the islands which did not then belong to Great Britain. With the view of facilitating this object, if it was approved, I made arrangements for the cession of the Fiji Islands. I argued that we should certainly be compelled ultimately to accept the cession of those islands. I showed that we might at that time do so unembarrassed by the land claims which in a few years would spring up, and free from many difficult questions which would have come into existence during the few years at the end of which I predicted we should be compelled to accept the cession.

10. When I made these recommendations, a compliance with them would have entailed but a trifling expense on Great Britain during a short period, for the Customs duties of each island would have paid the cost of the modest Government which it would have been necessary to establish.

11. As a part of this plan, hospitals were provided in New Zealand at which sick persons from the Pacific Islands could be cared for, and placed under skilful medical treatment. Schools were established in several parts of New Zealand at which, under special provisions for the purpose—which were intended to supplement primary education in the Islands—the children of Pacific Islanders could receive an excellent education; and numbers of such children were brought to New Zealand and educated here. The endowments for these establishments are still in existence. But my recommendations were overruled. A stop was put to the arrangements which had been made alike as to the Fiji Islands and the Friendly Group; and I stopped negotiations I had entered upon with regard to the cession of the Samoan Islands. All the difficulties I foretold grew into existence, and Great Britain has had to take the Fiji Islands and to face those difficulties. If, however, those plans had been sedulously followed out during the last thirty years, the Pacific would now have been studded with rising communities; a considerable and constantly-increasing commerce, very valuable at the present moment to Great Britain, would have been in existence; the city of Auckland would have been a great emporium for the Pacific trade; and such shocking scenes as are disclosed in the papers under consideration could not have taken place.

12. I still remain of the opinion I so long ago expressed, and I think now that if Great Britain will not accept the cession of those islands in the Pacific which do not belong to her, she should allow her colonies in this part of the world to do so. Their future interests and welfare are to the highest extent involved in this question: in fact, the whole future advancement and civilization of this part of the world depend upon it. On it hangs the question whether a common language, common laws, common civilization, and a similar form of government, shall prevail throughout the Pacific.

13. If other Powers come in and occupy the Pacific Islands, they will establish arsenals close to these colonies, which will not only imperil the future safety of the colonies, but will force a large and constant military expenditure upon them. The Powers who take such islands may also establish in them convict colonies, which may ultimately flood the British settlements with most undesirable persons; or they may set up communities with peculiar forms of civilization, in some cases establishing what might almost be kinds of slavery.

14. It is certain, also, if the Pacific Islands are held by Foreign Powers, that, in the future, disputes will arise between the British communities and such Foreign Powers, and that the Pacific may become the scene of constant wars, instead of being one vast area of peace and commerce of the most valuable kind, from the great variety of commodities which the islands can produce.

* Mr. Moors states that the labourers commenced work half an hour after daylight, and ceased three-quarters of an hour before sunset; a rest for two hours, from 10 o'clock until noon, being allowed them. The sunrise and sunset is almost exactly at 6 (within a few minutes) at all times of the year. Daylight, as there is little twilight, would begin at 5.30 a.m., and end at 6.30 p.m.