

THE QUEENSLAND SLAVE TRADE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE.

SIR,—As a Queenslander of nearly 25 years' standing, I cannot help noticing the long letter in your issue of this date signed by Mr. Morrison. I must, however, confess that I am altogether sceptical as to Mr. Morrison's ability to furnish the public with satisfactory proof of his statements. I have employed Kanaka labor myself on an up-country station. I have seen them at work on many occasions on other stations. I never yet heard of a case of maltreatment. I have heard of a Kanaka being knocked down for shooting with bow and arrow at his overseer. I have not lived on sugar plantations, but I have seen the "boys" at work among the canes on plantations on the Logan. All the Kanakas I have seen appeared to be well fed, well clothed and otherwise well cared for. I do not credit the statement of fourteen hours of daily work. Such a day's work might possibly occur on an emergency. Many white men have often to meet the same emergency. There are now so many "return" Kanakas in Queensland who speak English well and are thoroughly wide awake to the rights which they possess to protection, and also as to the ease with which they can procure protection from tyrannical treatment, that I, for one, will require ample proof before I can believe that sugar planters, or any sugar planter, would be guilty of such inexcusable brutality as is attributed to the owner or manager of a certain plantation spoken of by Mr. Morrison.—In connection with this subject, I may say that the Queensland police magistrates are, as a rule, gentlemen accustomed to show every opportunity to the hired servant (white or black) to thoroughly prove his grievances. In fact, I have found them generally inclined (perhaps properly so) to weigh facts, if at all, in favor of the servant.—I do not believe it possible for an employer of Kanakas in Queensland to habitually, or even occasionally, ill-use his servants. The white population of Queensland is too humane to admit of the neighbors of such a man standing by, and taking no steps to bring him to justice. Nor would the "boys" themselves submit to ill-usage. In conclusion, Mr. Morrison has made most grave and serious statements. As a Queenslander I call upon him to prove them. If he succeeds in doing so, I conceive that the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Australasian Colonies will take care that Queensland shall forthwith purge herself from such a foul offence to humanity, as Mr. Morrison would have us now believe that she is guilty of. I enclose my card, and until I see Mr. Morrison's case fully made out, I am proud to subscribe myself a
Melbourne, 9th May. QUEENSLANDER.