

last leader on it, which, though it may apply to the Lifu Islands, does not apply to the inhabitants of the New Hebrides group. It is true that the natives do not work or require to work like Europeans for their support, nor as a rule is their want and poverty caused by idleness and drunkenness among them as there is among us, but they work pretty hard and get their daily food by the sweat of the brow. They can get no food by hunting, and they get little by fishing, so that heathen necessity compels them to cultivate and depend on the soil for their food, even before Europeans go among them. There more than here, if a man will not work he cannot eat or support his family. The natives of this group do not roam about from place to place, but for mutual help and defence they live in settled villages, and cultivate the land for miles around like our country farmers. A family may be born, and live and die without ever being many miles away from their homes all their lives. At certain seasons, as with us, their fruit trees supply them with a considerable quantity of food, but they also require planting and care. However, they depend on the produce of the earth for their daily food as we do. They cultivate yams, taro, bananas, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and such tropical products, with maize, which I introduced among them 17 years ago. On Anietyum I have seen a mountain spring or stream carried in hollow trees, and water-courses cut zigzag for miles on the side of the mountain, where at great toil the ground was cut into beautiful terraces, some of them supported by stone walls, built from 4 to 10 feet high, on the under side, and all thus irrigated, and growing taro, sugar cane and bananas luxuriantly. Thus by the skill and toil of the natives in past ages, much land, otherwise useless, was made to produce a large quantity of valuable food. Such rich cultivated terraces on mountain sides may be seen from the sea in passing Totuna, Tanna, and some of our other islands, so that the New Hebrideans are not the slothful, idle creatures many represent them to be, but even as heathens an industrious people providing their food by their daily labor in cultivating their land, and every native has his own land and cultivations or plantation. Having thus from infancy been accustomed to cultivate the sugar cane extensively on their own islands, when landed on the sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji, they can do at once the familiar work required, even better than white men, hence they are so coveted for such work. But notwithstanding their industry, as heathens they are all cannibals, and groan under many miseries which Christianity alone with its civilizing and elevating power can remove and lift them above, as it makes them happier every way, whereas this labor traffic only enriches the few white men engaged in it, and employing it, as with its accompanying evils it spreads misery, disease and death among the islanders, depopulating the islands. We entreat your continued help in pleading for its complete suppression. In yours of the 14th "Mallicolo," in his letter, states that from his six years' experience as a sailor in a labor vessel and a trader on the islands, he can bear testimony to Mr. G. R. Morrison having described the true character of this traffic, and says:—"He tells a plain unvarnished tale, and a very mildly put tale; in fact he jets the trade down softly"—i.e., his experience of the evils and atrocities as seen by him, if described, would exceed in horrors what Mr. Morrison has written. Yet it is strange he had been so long in the traffic and had not seen some evils referred to, and stranger still to see him say, "If all the old boys did not turn up with the returned laborers, the recruiter would find it difficult to get fresh supplies," which appears plausible at the first glance. But how can the 10 per cent. who die on the plantations, and all who die on their way back or are killed by being landed among strangers on the islands ever again turn up at their own homes? And as the vessel that takes them away seldom returns then his statement is unaccountable. I do not believe one half of the Polynesians taken away ever turn up again at their homes, and the mere fraction I have seen returned too often only get home to die of exhaustion, consumption and diseases contracted when away. "Mallicolo" cannot see how Mr. Morrison has fixed on Queensland to expose its traffickers—simply because he made his voyage as a hand in a Queensland vessel and saw what he saw and described in it. Had he been in a Fiji or a French vessel he might have had as bad if not a worse account to give of what he saw. The evils of the traffic are much the same in the vessels of all the nationalities now engaged in it and as they now conduct it. As the assumed name "Mallicolo" is the name of a central island in the New Hebrides, which is the group the labor collectors have chiefly operated on, what he says about missions and missionaries is no doubt intended to apply to it, but he just speaks as nearly all the labor collectors and traffickers usually do of the missionary and his work, when he says, "I have many acts to be grateful to the missionary for, but I cannot plead the cause of missions. So far as I have seen from 1876 to date, I consider them a gigantic failure, the result being lamentably disproportionate to the outlay of life, brain and money. One matter I would earnestly ask those gentlemen to put a stop to at once—the marriage of white women to the princes and subjects of the sunny isles. The mode of life, the filthy and degraded morals of some of those islands should sufficiently deter any man acquainted with the inner life of the noble savages from joining the two races at the altar." Surely this is a joke; but such insinuations, misrepresentations and ingratitude as "Mallicolo's" is what we missionaries usually get from such labor traffickers and collectors. The missionary on all occasions, when they apply to him, and that is not seldom (for their vessels are often "ill found"), cheerfully gives them medical advice and medicine, and has frequently had to take their sick and wounded into his own home on the islands and nurse them, supplying all their wants till recovery or death. We have even had to give their ships food, and their articles of clothing, and to risk our own lives to save theirs when they had provoked the natives to retaliate by their atrocities, and all without payment or reward of any kind by them, except misrepresentation and abuse. Though we do all the good we possibly can to them they hate the missionary, because his presence is in the way of their being able to sweep the islands clear of their native populations without fear of exposure or punishment, and the blessed effects of his teaching is to lift the natives above complying with the collectors' immoral, degraded habits, and also prevents them being so easily deceived and got away from their islands by them. I do not know what may have taken place on the French Islands, and on others, but I can assure you and your readers that while there is scarcely a labor collector in the South Seas who does not regularly use the native women as wives, and many such are carried by them in their vessels, and live with their agents and traders on shore; there is not, and never has been, one native of the New Hebrides on the group married to a white woman, nor has such a marriage ever been performed by any of our missionaries. Indeed, the only white woman I ever saw on the group who could have been so married was one brought down by the traffickers, a degraded creature, who, after they had got tired of her, put her on shore, and left her unprotected and unprovided for among savages not far from a mission station. The missionary, as an act of Christian charity, had to take her into his own house, and keep her till a vessel called, when we ourselves subscribed some £15 or £20 to pay her passage, and get her away again to the colonies. The habits of the labor collectors on the islands, "their mode of life and filthy degraded morals," are beastly, even when compared with the heathen. The native Christians are so disgusted with the traffickers, and so afraid of them and their conduct, that the females avoid them, and flee from them as they would from a dreaded pestilence which spreads disease and death in its wake. "Mallicolo" thinks our mission, "a gigantic failure." Let me lay the following statement of facts before your readers and you, and then judge for yourselves if it has been so:—Little over 30 years ago this mission was begun, when the whole inhabitants of the group were cannibals, naked savages without a written language, bowing down to stocks and stone idols. Infanticide was common among them, and the sick and the aged were destroyed when no longer able to work for themselves. Might was right, and the strong oppressed the weak, while they groaned under their heathen misery. In trying to introduce the Gospel among them, first—yes, I might say six—missionaries were murdered, and many others, and many native teachers, fell and died in the work, yet we persevered till now that by God's blessing on our efforts and teaching, about 8000 are under Christian instruction. Thirteen islands have missionaries, and on them life and property are now rendered safe. The Bible, in part or in whole, has been translated and printed, and is read in nine different languages of the group, and chiefly paid for by the natives. For instance, the Anietyumess have paid £1800, got by the sale of their arrowroot, for the printing and binding of the complete Bible in their language, as translated by their missionaries. Sixteen years ago the Aniwans were all cannibals; now they are all professed Christians, and from 70 to 80 are church members, and by the sale of their arrowroot they have paid nearly £100 for the printing of 13 books of the Bible in their language. Besides, for a number of years past they have sent £10 yearly to the mission funds of our church, while on Anietyum and Anewa every family takes family worship night and morning, and so on among all the Christians of our group. Through the mission 70,000 heathen on the group are now prepared, ready and waiting, and crying to us for the missionary to give them the gospel with its blessings as soon as we can get them. On Errumanga 100 persons were baptized and admitted to the Lord's table last year; on Anewa, in 18 months, 40 were admitted; on Efate last year, 29, &c., while the whole group is white to the heart, and crying for the missionary. Oh, that we had now the funds to get them for them. Will any, except labor traffickers like "Mallicolo," call a mission which can produce such an epitome of facts regarding its work done, with such blessed fruits given—a mission that for the time "brain, labor and money" expended in it, and to which God has given such glorious fruits—a gigantic failure? Will any except an enemy to Christianity, who has no sense of justice, call such a mission a failure, when few missions have been so successful for the time and means used? As I am now in Victoria laboring to get the money to support the needed mission, and as "Mallicolo's" letter might keep back some contributions and dishearten other friends, I shall feel obliged if you publish this.—Yours, &c.,

Kew, 10th May.

JOHN G. PATON.

THE QUEENSLAND LABOR TRAFFIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE.

SIR,—Permit me in the interests of humanity to thank Mr. G. R. Morrison and you for the publication of his able letter on the Polynesian Labor Traffic, and for your leaders on this subject. This traffic has carried off about a third of the population of the New Hebrides group, and of many other islands, as it rapidly depopulates them by spreading misery, disease and death in its wake. What Mr. Morrison saw on his voyage in the Queensland labor vessel, and so describes, I believe is what is constantly taking place in this traffic, as I have seen its doings from the beginning on the islands. Please also let your readers see the following, from a letter I published in the *Argus* of the 30th April, and ask them if a traffic so steeped in blood and misery is not a foul stain on our Australian honor and British glory, seeing that England has done so much to suppress slavery in other lands:—"Two boats from the Seara, a labor vessel, went in the South River, on the island of Errumanga. The one was in charge of a white man, who was or ought to have been the Government agent; the other was in charge of a native, his interpreter or decoy. The white man's boat got a lad, supposed to be kidnapped, while the native in charge of the other boat kidnapped a high chief's daughter, and carried her off by force. After a desperate struggle, in which he shot twice at her, and shot a man in the side with a ball, and shot the chief, her father, dead on the spot, leaving him weltering in his blood they secured his daughter and carried her to the white man's boat, which took her and the lad off to the Seara. The boat, in charge of the native, now glided along the shore for 8 miles in search of others; and, in trying to kidnap a Christian teacher on the same day, the same native was unable to hold him, and with his revolver sent a ball through the teacher, leaving him dead; when he left in his boat to carry on such work on other islands north, in helping to secure recruits for the labor vessel." Now, surely the captain and agent who sent this boat and man on shore, supplied by them with such arms and ammunition, to take such lives in securing their prey, are responsible for such kidnapping and murders. "The teacher they shot was one of the ablest and most devoted Christian workers on Errumanga." I pity the man who can read such accounts of the doings of this shocking "labor traffic," and on any pretence attempt to justify it or plead for its continuance. I say even now doing such things with Government agents on board the labor vessels, and after the traffic has been improved and regulated as far as possible to prevent such deeds, by the united wisdom of the British and colonial Governments, which proves to me that its evils and atrocity are inseparable from all such traffic in men and women; it is closely allied to slavery from its every aspect. Therefore, we plead and entreat all who can help to plead for its complete suppression, by Great Britain at once, as the only remedy for its many evils. Look at it as you may, it is infamous to the Polynesian and degrading to all white and black engaged in it, and destroys the work of christianizing and civilizing them. Permits me to say that there is one thing in your