

murders. These paragraphs are undoubtedly written in good faith, and no doubt contain the best account obtainable by the editor of the transactions to which they refer; but it is often found on subsequent examination that such narratives are, owing to very obvious causes, not always to be relied on as strictly accurate.

The Appendix further contains two leading articles from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (pp. 27, 28), which, though based on erroneous assumptions, are fairly and temperately written; and no fewer than eleven extracts from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* (pp. 23 to 25, and 29 to 35), censuring in strong terms the High Commissioner, the Commodore commanding the Australian squadron, the Chief Judicial Commissioner, and the Government of the Colony of Fiji. There is also a letter in a similar strain addressed to the Secretary of the Conference by a person of the name of Thomas, the avowed author of two of the extracts taken from the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, with which newspaper I am informed he is closely connected,—a statement which the internal evidence afforded by the remainder of the extracts from that journal would incline me to believe to be well founded.

It is not easy to understand the object of the Conference in reprinting and giving official circulation to these articles. It is certainly not to convey information as to facts, for they contain none. It cannot be to exhibit the state of popular opinion in Australia, for the extracts are almost exclusively taken from a single Sydney journal; and even in the choice of these extracts care has been taken to limit them to such as reflect but one opinion; the anonymous letter of "A Queenslander," (p. 35,) containing little but invective, being inserted, whilst that of a man so competent to speak on the subject as the Rev. Mr. Murray, referred to at page 31, is omitted. I am not well acquainted with Australian journals, but I know that some of them entertain different views from those advocated by the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*.

Yet it would be inconsistent with the respect due to a Conference consisting of the leading officials of the Australian Colonies to suppose that they intended to imply their own adoption of statements they have had no means of verifying, their concurrence in recommendations that the Solomon Islanders should be "cruelly and relentlessly massacred,"\* or their participation in attacks on officers of the Imperial Government, on high judicial authorities, and on the Government of a colony unrepresented at the meeting of the Conference.

But, whatever the motive of the publication, the fact remains that grave charges against the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, the Commodore commanding on the Australian Station, the Chief Justice of Fiji, and the Government of that colony generally, have been reprinted at the public expense by order of the Conference, and have been presented by command of the Governor to the Parliament of New South Wales, and probably to the Legislatures of other colonies, thus giving to them a wide-spread official circulation. These facts, and the deduction which will inevitably, if erroneously, be in many quarters drawn from them, that the Conference adopts the charges made, render it, I think, desirable that their want of foundation should at once be made apparent.

The charge preferred against the High Commissioner is twofold. It is alleged that he has, on the one hand, shown undue leniency towards the misdeeds of natives, and, on the other, has shown equally undue harshness in the punishment of British subjects when charged before him with offences against natives.

The jurisdiction of the High Commissioner extends over all British subjects in the Western Pacific, but over British subjects exclusively. He has no authority whatever to deal, whether judicially or in his executive capacity, with the offences of natives of islands not under the dominion of the Crown.

The High Commissioner has on more than one occasion pointed out to the Imperial Government that, unless a jurisdiction were created competent to take cognizance of offences committed against British subjects in the Pacific beyond Her Majesty's possessions, the infliction of punishment on British subjects for outrages against natives in the same regions, when such cases came before the

\* "The course that the captain of H.M.S. 'Emerald' is called upon to pursue certainly does not form part of a "civilized programme. . . . Our people have been *cruelly and relentlessly massacred*, and the *Solomon Islanders* "must be dealt with in like fashion. All ideas founded on Exeter-Hallism must be thrown to the winds. If they are 'not, the 'Emerald' might as well remain at Farm Cove" (p. 30).