

THE CASE OF THE "YOUNG DICK".

If the natives of the island of Aoba might reasonably be described as the most perfidious and cold-blooded in the New Hebrides in the mid-eighties of the last century (see, for example, the story entitled "The "May Queen" Massacre"), the natives of the island of Malaita might similarly be characterized as far as the Solomon Islands were concerned. Thus, Captain Arthur T. Brooke of H.M.S. Opal in a despatch to Rear-Admiral G. Tryon in Sydney, dated the 29th June, 1886, wrote:-

"... during my last visit to the Solomons, I had heard right through that the Malayta natives were the most treacherous and least to be trusted, at the present time, of all the natives in the Solomon Group".

Again, Rear-Admiral Tryon himself, in addressing the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in a letter dated the 8th July, 1886, referred to the Malaita men as -

"natives well known to be treacherous and cruel".

Indeed there was evidence of these qualities of the Malaita men as late as the mid-twenties of the present century when a European District Officer and his companion Cadet were, though entirely defenceless and without giving the slightest provocation, brutally murdered on that island.

But, if the Malaita men were treacherous and cruel, the circumstances which gave rise to this reputation in the eighties were such that their actions could be condoned, at least in some degree. In telling the following tale, entitled "The Case of the "Young Dick" - a tale of treachery, bloodshed and massacre of Europeans and Malaita men alike, every effort has been made to bring out the facts that, even if violence and treachery were endemic and commonplace amongst the natives themselves in mid-century, such characteristics were greatly intensified and made more widespread in consequence of the creation of an environment which they had no part in originating.

The opening chapter in the story is set out in the following report of Captain Brooke to Rear-Admiral Tryon in Sydney, the various enclosures to the report and some additional minor facts being interpolated in parenthesis in the report so as to ensure the completeness and smooth running of the narrative.

"Attempted murder of John Hornidge, boatswain of the Queensland labour-vessel, "Young Dick", by natives of the village of Roas, east side of Malayta Island, Solomon Group, about 6 miles to northward of Saa.

H.M.S. "Opal" off Saa,
Malayta Island, 8 May, 1886.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, on my arrival at Port Adam, Malayta Island, I found the labour vessels "Young Dick" and "Meg Merrilies" (on a recruiting voyage from Fiji) at anchor. The "Young Dick", with the signal flying - "in want of medical assistance", which was at once sent.

2. On my anchoring, the Government Agent of the "Young Dick", Mr. Popham, reported that the boatswain, John Hornidge, while recruiting at a village called Roas, on the 2nd May, 1886, had been tomahawked and very nearly killed by the natives of that place. I inclose a copy of Mr. Popham's entry in his official log respecting the circumstance.

(Copy of the Government Agent's log, ship "Young Dick", Sunday, 2nd May, 1886.

Boats left the vessel while at anchor in "Maramasiki Bay" Malayta, at 6.15 a.m., and at about 7.15 a.m. the recruiter was persuaded to go ashore by an apparently friendly native; he was not long away before he was noticed running down to the boats with several tomahawk wounds, but no natives were to be seen anywhere. After being picked up several shots were fired into the bush while the boats were pulling out towards the vessel.

John Hornidge, the recruiter, states that he was not far from the houses (which were on the beach) when two men rushed at him with tomahawks and knocked him down twice, inflicting wounds at the same time, when he managed to produce his revolver and they cleared away. The six chambers were discharged in the direction in which they ran, but he did not see them at the time of firing.

Got under way at 10 a.m., and rounded up in Port Adam at 5.30 p.m., the "Meg Merrilies" lying close to. Since arriving in Port Adam I have discovered from a neighbouring chief that the man who decoyed the recruiter ashore vowed vengeance against the first white man he could get ashore on account of his chief dying in Fiji when he was serving there.

There is one wound almost severing the vertebrae, and four deep cuts in the fleshy part of the back, which I have sewn up, with the assistance of Mr. Bevan, Government Agent, per "Meg Merrilies". There is also one large piece of flesh cut off the heel of right foot.)

I at once went on board the "Young Dick", and took down the statements of Hornidge and the other three white men who were in the boats.

(Statement made before me on board the schooner "Young Dick" by John Hornidge belonging to that ship at Port Adam, Malayta Island, on 6th May, 1886.

"I went ashore recruiting as I had been ashore getting water twice before. A boy, Rady, who had been living on board the "Young Dick" some three days, was on the beach and asked me to go up. I went up and was talking, and asked him when the other boy (a recruit) would be coming down; he said directly, so I waited about four minutes. Another man then came along with a long-handled tomahawk; he stood up and looked at me but did not speak. I told him I would go down to the boat (Rady understood English, having served a term in Fiji); as I turned sideways towards the beach, about 50 yards off, I received a blow from each of the tomahawks which knocked me down. I got up and was knocked down again with two more blows; then I went for the boats - got in, and was pulled off. I will swear I gave no provocation in any way, and I had always been good friends with Rady").

(Statement made before me on the schooner "Young Dick" by Thomas Grittenden, belonging to that ship, at Port Adam, Malayta Island, on 6th May, 1886.

"I was in the covering boat last Sunday morning (2nd May). We pulled round the bay, and then to the village called Roas. The recruiting boat then backed in and we laid off. Rady was on the beach and began conversation with Hornidge. I lost sight of Hornidge for two minutes about. The next time I saw him he was running down to the boat wounded, and got into my boat, and we returned on board. Hornidge fired his revolver about four times from the boat").

(Thomas Donnelly called before me, and on being first questioned as to the time Hornidge was absent from the boat, positively declared "only two minutes". He was one of the recruiting boat's crew, and he fully corroborated Crittenden's statement).

(Alfred Lovett called before me, and on being first questioned as to the time Hornidge was absent from the boat, positively declared only two or three minutes. He was in the covering boat, and he fully corroborated Crittenden's statement).

"3. Mr. Popham said the reason he was not in the covering boat as usual was on account of the schooner being anchored so close in; he did not think it necessary, and both he and Captain Rogers stated that they were certain the boat was not quite a quarter of an hour altogether at this village, and that they saw the boats pulling quickly away, and counted the four shots fired by Hornidge from his revolver as they pulled out.

4. I beg to enclose the statements of these men.

5. The Rev. R.B. Comins, of the Melanesian Mission, at Saa, at once volunteered to send his boat down to Roas with a message from me to the chief, Tara Koke, and I therefore wrote the following which was clearly written in the Mota language, by Mr. Comins, and translated into the Malayta tongue by a boy from the Melanesian Mission, who was with Mr. Comins at the time.

(Message.

Captain of man-of-war sends this word to the chief of Roas:- He finds that white man has been nearly killed by Radi and his men of his village, five days ago. This white man could not have done any harm to anybody, as he had only just gone ashore. Now, Captain of man-of-war says, this man Radi and other men must be sent on board to him in a Roas canoe, when they will be examined and dealt justly by, according to what they have done; or, if he cannot catch them, the chief of Roas must himself come on board and explain why he cannot get them. If this is not done in one day-time, then man-of-war will go round to the chief's village and punish all the people there. Captain of man-of-war wants to tell the chief of Roas that the reason he came to Malayta was that he had heard white man of schooner had killed a chief some time ago, and he came to inquire about it, and has heard, and white man will be punished; so, now that black man harms white man then he must be punished too.).

This was conveyed, and most certainly clearly translated, to Tara Koke, chief of Roas. Dorawewe, chief of Saa, had also accompanied Mr. Comins, and he being a friend of Tara Koke went in the boat, and did what he could to get Radi and the other men given up, or to come himself. Dorawewe, before leaving this ship, had it thoroughly explained to him that if Radi and the other men came on board they would not be killed, but dealt justly by. At the time I had some hope that they would be successful, but on their return they told us that they had seen Tara Koke, Radi, and all the tribe. That Tara Koke would not give the men up, or come on board himself, and that there was no chance of his ever coming, no matter how long I liked to wait. I enclose a letter from Mr. Comins, reporting exactly what his boat's crew did and heard; and I came to the conclusion that there was no doubt in the truth of their statement.

(Mr. Richard Blundell Comins to Captain A.J. Brooke.
H.M.S. "Opal", Port Adam, 7th May, 1886.
Sir,

In reply to your request to give you all the information I can collect in reference to the cause of the outrage upon a white man at Roas, on May 2nd, I beg to inform you that I sent in my boat today with a crew of natives connected with my mission school at Saa, and they met the Roas people upon their own beach, and saw Tara Koke the chief and Radi the man who led the attack. Radi declared that he himself had no ill will against the white man, who gave him no provocation whatever; but on returning home from Fiji he had been taunted by his own people with being friendly with the white men who stole away their chief, Mau or Mahu, four years ago, the news of whose death at Fiji had recently been communicated to them by another returned labourer. Being instigated by his friends, he had decoyed the white man ashore and attempted to take his life. I have every confidence that my interpreter who went in the boat conveyed to the Roas people the message you sent them by him, and that he took great pains to explain it to them. The answer returned was that Radi would not be given up, and the chief would not consent to come on board the "Opal" to explain matters. The account they give of the stealing of their chief is that he was alongside the boat of a Fiji labour vessel on his own beach at Roas, and detained them longer than the people in the boat approved; at last the white man in charge being angry with him ordered his crew to row out to the ship, and seized the wrist of the chief holding it firmly on to the gunwale of the boat. When they reached the deep water he was dragged on board and carried off to Fiji. There is no means of knowing the name of the vessel or any other particulars.).

6. After carefully weighing and considering the facts of this case I could not but believe that the attempt on this man's life was one of a most treacherous and cruel nature. The man Radi had been at Fiji for three years, spoke English, and had been three days on board the "Young Dick" as interpreter, and was evidently only waiting his chance to kill a white man to get a head, for the reason given in Mr. Comins' letter. By his friendliness to the man Hornidge, he unfortunately put him off his guard, and enticed him a few yards from the boat. I feel sure that there was no provocation given at the time.

7. Taking all these facts into careful consideration, I came to the conclusion that this was a case that it was necessary to inflict punishment by an act of war; that it was impossible to expect, under the circumstances, to have it tried at any time by any civilized tribunal, and that it was of a nature to demand punishment. Accordingly, after returning Mr. Comins and his native boat's crew back to Saa, I weighed in the morning of the 8th May from Port Adam, taking the schooner "Young Dick" in tow, and anchored both vessels in the bay opposite Tara Koke's village. I considered by having the schooner with me it would impress on the natives around more forcibly the object of my visit.

8. The country around all this part of Malayta is one dense, high and thick forest, and no house or village could be seen from the ship; but I had the position of the village where this tribe lived clearly pointed out by some recruits on board the "Young Dick". I also got a good description from the native crew of Mr. Comins' boat.

" I feel sure I hit upon the right spot, and fired some well-directed shell at the place, and as the country was so impenetrable, and neither canoes or cocoa-nuts to be seen, I considered it prudent not to land any men, but thought that this mode of punishing them would meet the case. On communicating afterwards at Saa (where I took Mr. Comins on board, as I did not consider it safe to leave him there), I heard that the visit of the man-of-war, and her subsequent movements, so soon after the attack on this man, has impressed and astonished the natives all round very much.

9. It was notable that whilst at anchor off Tara Koke's village, no natives were seen on his side of the bay, whilst on the other side the natives came down to the beach and stood quietly and watched the shells being fired. This gives the impression that as they had not committed any outrage they need not be afraid, and consequently the greatest care was taken that no harm was done to them. A greater number were on the beach on the opposite side to Tara Koke's village as the ship steamed out with the schooner "Young Dick" again in tow, which was cast off soon afterwards.

10. The Staff-Surgeon of this ship gave it as his opinion that the only chance of John Hornidge living was careful medical attendance. I had him taken on board this ship for treatment.

(Staff-Surgeon R.W. Brereton to Captain A.T. Brooke.
Report on the condition of John Hornidge, boatswain, "Young Dick".

H.M.S. "Opal", Port Adam, 7 May, 1886.

Sir,

In accordance with your request I have the honour to inform you that on our arrival at this port I went on board the schooner "Young Dick", and found the boatswain, John Hornidge, in the following condition. He was suffering from four wounds, which were evidently made with a small axe or tomahawk. They were as follows:- A wound across the nape of the neck 2 in. long, and so deep as to expose the vertebrae. Secondly, a wound on the back of the right shoulder 3 in. long and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep. Thirdly, a wound the same length as the last through the muscles of the back on the left side, almost exposing the ribs; and lastly on the right side of the spine a scrape about 8 in. long, half an in. deep at either end, but very shallow in the middle.

P.S. John Hornidge has progressed favourably under treatment on board this ship, but is not fit to be moved at present.

Approved - Arthur T. Brooke, Captain, 21 May, 1886).

"11. I trust you will approve my proceedings.

I etc.

Arthur T. Brooke,
Captain."

Two points arising from Captain Brooke's report are perhaps worthy of comment. The allegation made by the villagers of Roas of the "stealing" (i.e. kidnapping) of their chief and his transportation to Fiji is by no means beyond the bounds of credibility. Kidnapping and all other forms of deceit were widely indulged in by the recruiters and ships' captains in the early eighties, and the villagers may well have decided to take their revenge.

The reference to the infliction of punishment by means of "an act of war", however, deserved some clarification. Although H.M. ships had operated in the Pacific from the early seventies, their aim was essentially to assist their own nationals in the islands, especially in their relations with the native populations. Though legislation

was enacted by the Imperial Parliament in 1872 and 1875, and provided for the appointment of a High Commissioner for the Western Pacific and the establishment of a Court, the Order in Council authorizing such an appointment and establishing such a Court was not made until 1877. But such legislation was designed solely to control British subjects and there was no provision with regard to offences committed by natives nor powers for their punishment. The High Commissioner had no authority to deal, whether judicially or in an executive capacity, with offences committed by persons not British subjects, whether by natives or other foreigners. In effect, he was powerless to take judicial cognizance of any offence committed by a native, whether Polynesian, Melanesian or Micronesian, not being subjects of Her Majesty, as very few indeed then were.

In order to remedy this situation, the British Government agreed to the creation and operation of what can at best be termed a legal fiction by authorizing commanding officers of H.M. ships, if unable to intervene and settle disputes amicably, to punish natives for offences against British subjects by declaring acts of war against a tribe or tribes. Such acts were in fact often made with considerable formality, e.g. by written missive or notice.

But, more often than not, such acts of war failed in their intended effects. Sometimes it is true a chief might be taken prisoner or surrendered, and even on rare occasions suffer capital punishment, but commonly an act of war consisted of the village of the offending tribe being bombarded by H.M. ships. This usually resulted in the destruction of houses, canoe sheds and sometimes canoes, but little else, and no casualties. As the native houses could be quickly reconstructed by communal labour, this caused no great hardship though the rebuilding of canoes was a more serious matter. But, in general, the policy was ineffective, though little else could be done until Great Britain assumed jurisdiction over the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and Solomon Islands in the early nineties and, with France, a condominium over the New Hebrides in 1906.

To resume the narrative of the "Young Dick", it might be thought that such a disastrous start to the recruiting voyage, and the loss of the recruiter, John Hornidge (who was taken to Brisbane), coupled with the general reputation of the Malaita men, might have discouraged the captain and his crew from recruiting further, at any rate on Malaita, and especially as they had already engaged thirteen recruits. Further, Captain Brooke recommended the captains of the "Young Dick" and the "Meg Merrilies" that they should leave the island for a time and not recruit there for the present. But the captains of both ships declined to accept the advice, arguing that it was the best recruiting area in the Solomon Islands and that all was quiet. The captain of the "Meg Merrilies" also said that he knew the natives round Malaita well and felt quite safe. It was this sublime self-confidence and unshakeable belief in their own ability to treat safely with natives than caused more tragedies in recruitment than any other cause.

But the affair at the village of Roas was merely the prelude in the saga of the "Young Dick", the principal chapters of which were later to be told in an inquiry held between the 5th and 9th June by H.R. Buttanshaw, Police Magistrate at Maryborough, Queensland. His covering report, forwarding depositions and exhibits, briefly summarized certain salient features of the inquiry as follows:-

The Colonial Secretary,
Brisbane, Queensland.

Maryborough,
11 June, 1886.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward, under separate enclosure, depositions with exhibits connected with inquiry held here into an attack made by natives of Serago, Malayta on the crew of the "Young Dick", recruiting vessel.

During this attack the Government Agent, with three of the European crew and one recruit, were killed, and the vessel nearly taken.

I cannot discover that any provocation was given to the natives.

According to the evidence the attack was a preconcerted one, not the result of sudden excitement. I gather from the private memo. of the Government Agent that the natives of Malayta were uniformly hostile.

Though the fears of, at least, some of the crew seem to have been pretty loudly expressed, there seems to have been no precaution taken.

Even during the absence of the boats natives in large numbers were allowed on board.

I etc.

H.R. Buttanshaw, S.M. "

(Note - A sketch of the deck of the "Young Dick" is attached at the conclusion of this story to facilitate the understanding of the evidence given by various witnesses).

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Court-house, Maryborough,
Saturday, 5 June, 1886.

Before H.R. Buttanshaw, Esq., P.M.

INQUIRY into the massacre of the Government Agent and others of the "Young Dick" recruiting schooner, and other outrages committed during that vessel's recent voyage to the South Sea Islands.

Mr. T. Morton, solicitor, appears on behalf of the owners of the vessel.

John Hugh Rogers, on oath, saith:- I am the master of the schooner "Young Dick", licensed to recruit Polynesians, and was master during her late trip to the South Seas; the official log of the schooner is at the Customs House; the mate keeps the ship's log; I left Brisbane for the South Seas with the "Young Dick" on the 7th April last; I first called at Guadalcanar, then Malayta; I think we arrived at Malayta about the 29th April last; on the 2nd May the recruiter, when at Malu, was tomahawked by the natives; he was ashore recruiting at the time of the occurrence; I produce the ship's official log (exhibit A); the recruiting boat was in charge of John Hornidge, and the covering boat in charge of Thomas Crittenden; I was on board the ship; the boats left about half-past seven in the morning and returned about 8 o'clock in the morning; when the boats returned John Hornidge, the boatswain and recruiter, was wounded on the neck, he also had four cuts on the back and one on the right heel; they did not bring any recruits in the boats; we left that place at 10 o'clock the same day; we went to Port Adam - on the same Island - about 7 or 8 miles away; we did not try to recruit there; we then went farther along the coast on the east side of Malayta; we got eight boys at Malu; after remaining at Port Adam three or four days Her Majesty's ship "Opal" came there; I went on board her; other recruits examined and passed by Lieutenant Wright; I reported to him the attack on Hornidge, at Mabbo, and in consequence that fifteen or sixteen shells were fired from the "Opal" into the village of Mabbo;

"Mabbo is about 30 miles distant from Serago, the place where the massacre occurred; H.M.S. "Opal" towed us from Port Adam to Mabbo; after leaving Mabbo we worked along the coast till we arrived at Serago; we got there about noon on the 19th May; the boats left the ship between 1 and 2 o'clock; some of the natives came aboard before the boats left, but nothing unusual occurred; I was in the recruiting boat myself; there were also James Toohy and three blacks, Jack, Api Brogan, and another of the boat's crew, but I don't remember his name; there were two white men in the other boat - Alfred Lovett and Thomas Donnelly - and three blacks belonging to the crew - Sulao, Charlie Florida, and Toba; Lackwood was the other black in my boat; both boats kept together all the time; the first went to the beach abreast of the ship, which was lying at anchor about 150 or 200 yards from the shore; we did not land, we talked to the natives from the boats; we pulled from there to a village to the eastward of the ship; we did not land there nor get any recruits, we then went past the ship to the eastward along the coast about a mile and a half from the ship; we talked to the natives there, but did not leave the boats; the natives appeared to be very friendly; and we had no quarrelling with them at all; we returned to the ship about half-past 5 that evening, and found everything all right; on the following morning, the 20th, we left the ship between 9 and 10 in the morning; we had the same men in the boats as on the previous day; we left aboard the ship Mr. Popham, Government Agent; the mate, Marr; the carpenter, Bean; the cook and steward H. Merlin; Thomas Crittenden, able seaman, and Q.F. Lagerbloom, able seaman; Bash, one of the boat's crew, and fourteen recruits, thirteen of which were brought to Maryborough; the other one was killed; we first went to the westward of the ship, where we had been the day before, without landing anywhere and without any disturbance from the natives; we then saw a flag hoisted at the foremast of the ship, signalling us to return to the ship; we then pulled back towards the ship; I first saw the mate and Crittenden standing forward on the starboard side when we got to the ship; when I came within speaking distance of the vessel I called out to the mate, Marr, "What is the matter?" and he replied, "We two are the only white men left"; I then got aboard and found the Government Agent in his own cabin; he was dead, and was much cut about the face and head; I found the carpenter dead in the dining-room, and the cook and steward was just breathing as I got there; he died immediately afterwards; Lagerbloom was lying half in and half out of my cabin; he was not quite dead; the recruit was lying dead on the deck on the port side; there were five natives lying dead about the deck; the two men who I said were not quite dead when I arrived died shortly afterwards; the mate told me they were attacked by the natives, whom they beat off; and those of the crew who were dead had been killed by them; the bodies of the dead white men were sewn in canvas and buried in deep water; the bodies of the natives were put overboard; we got the vessel under way about 2 o'clock the following morning, the 21st May, and came direct to Maryborough; the first place where an outrage occurred was at Mabbo, the second place Huichoni, near the Sisters, on the east coast of Malaya; on that occasion we were anchored about a cable-length from the shore; a native came down the beach near the ship; we got three recruits that day who told us that a boy wanted to recruit on shore; this was about 6 in the evening; I could only see one man on the beach; we lowered a boat, and I went in it myself with Donnelly and three of the boat's crew, Jack, Api Brogan and Bash; we pulled to the shore, and when we got there

"the native went into the bush and made motions for the boat to remain there; we thought the native intended to fire on the boat, so we pulled out from shore; when we were pulling from the shore the natives showered arrows at us, one of which struck Bash, one of the boat's crew. The three outrages mentioned by me are the only ones that occurred; Huichoni is between Mabbo and Serago; it is about 20 miles from Mabbo and 15 or 16 miles from Serago; there was no disturbance when recruiting the three boys at Huichoni; they belonged to the opposite side of the bay from where we were showered with arrows; I have recruited from the three places before mentioned on a previous occasion and the natives always appeared to be very friendly; the only reason I can give for the attack at Serago was plunder; the "Borealis" was taken by the natives in 1880, and the "Janet Stewart" close to Serago". Taken and sworn before me at Maryborough
J.H. Rogers.
this 5th day of June, A.D. 1886.

H.R. Buttanshaw, P.M. ++++++++

John Hugh Rogers, recalled: On the morning of the 20th May it was raining, and the Government Agent was unwell and did not go in the boats; he was in the boat when we obtained the last six recruits; I am not certain whether he was in the boats at Mabbo; sometimes the boats went recruiting without him; when the vessel was anchored close to shore, he did not always go in the boats; the "Meg Merrilies", recruiting vessel from Fiji, was at Port Adam on the 2nd May; she had been recruiting at Malayta, but I don't know how many she recruited there; she had thirty-five on board, but I don't know how many of them belonged to Malayta; I saw the master of the "Meg Merrilies"; he made no complaint to me about the natives at Malayta".

Taken and sworn before me at Maryborough
J.H. Rogers.
this 7th day of June, A.D. 1886.

H.R. Buttanshaw, P.M. ++++++++

(Note - Two books, which make mention of the tragedy, state that Captain Rogers was part owner of the "Young Dick"; a third book states that Captain Rogers -

"had formerly avoided Malaita as a place to recruit, being afraid of the natives, who long ago had set a price on his head".

However, in view of the evidence given at the inquiry, which was not refuted, this allegation seems very unlikely).

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Charles Henry Marr, being called, is too drunk to give evidence.

Alfred Lovett, James Toohey, and Thomas Donnelly are called, but do not appear.

H.R. Buttanshaw, P.M.

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Thomas Crittenden, on oath, saith:- I am an able seaman; I signed articles and shipped on the "Young Dick" schooner, at Brisbane, on the 29th March last, with John Hugh Rogers as master; we sailed to the South Sea Islands for the purpose of recruiting; I recollect our touching at the island of Malayta, about the beginning of May last; I knew Hornidge, the recruiter and boatswain; I recollect him going ashore then at Malayta; I don't know what he went ashore for; I went in one boat with Alfred Lovett, and Donnelly went in the other boat with Hornidge;

"Hornidge went in the recruiting boat, and I went in the covering boat; I saw Hornidge leave the boat and go ashore by himself; there was one native ashore, and Hornidge went with him in the bush; I saw him return to the boat about three or four minutes afterwards; the blood then was running from his neck; I afterwards saw he was wounded on the neck, shoulder, and back, and also the heel; both boats then pulled back to the ship, taking Hornidge with us; we then sailed to Port Adam; the "Meg Merrilies" was there when we arrived; the Government Agent came on board and dressed Hornidge's wounds; I remember H.M.S. "Opal" coming into Port Adam while we were there; the Doctor and Lieutenant Wright came on board; the Doctor attended to Hornidge's wounds; an inquiry into the wounding of Hornidge was held on board the "Young Dick" by Lieutenant Wright; I gave evidence at that inquiry which was taken down in writing; the "Opal" then towed us back to Mabbo where Hornidge was wounded; we anchored there and the "Opal" fired some shells into the village; the "Opal" then towed us out, and we went in the direction of Port Adam again; I remember a place, which I think is called "Huichoni", near the Sisters; we arrived there two or three days after we left Mabbo; I believe that is the place where one of the boat's crew, named Bash, got struck with an arrow; he was in the same boat as the captain at the time, and about 300 yards from the ship; I was not in the boats; Donnelly was in the boat with the captain; he was the only white man besides the captain in that boat; the man Bash was wounded in the muscle of the left arm, which we pinned to his side; he came back to Maryborough with the ship; I think we recruited two boys before the arrow was fired, and on the same day; I believe we went away early the next morning to a place called Jyoh, about four miles away; we got one recruit there; we then went to the next bay further on, and from there to Serago; it is about fourteen or fifteen miles from the place where the arrow was fired, to Serago; we arrived at Serago about the 19th May; we anchored about 200 yards from shore; the recruiting boat with Captain Rogers, James Toohey and three of the boat's crew, and the other boat with Alfred Lovett, Donnelly and three of the boat's crew, then went to the shore recruiting; I remained aboard; the Government Agent also remained aboard on account of being unwell; the boats returned that evening without any recruits; during the time the boats were ashore two or three dozen natives came from shore to the ship; some of them came on board; they appeared to be friendly; there was no row with them that day; when the captain came back with the boats there were one or two remaining on board, the remainder had gone ashore; on the following day, the 20th of May, the boats went away; I was sleeping down below when they left; about half-past 11 that morning I awoke and went on deck and saw three or four natives scuffling with the sailmaker; I didn't know his name; I had nothing on but a singlet; I ran back to my bunk and got my revolver, and went on deck again; the scuffle was on the starboard side; when I came up again from my bunk I went on the port side; I did not see anything of the sailmaker or any other white man; I went along the port side; when I got as far as the galley one of the natives from shore tried to stop me; he jumped in front of me and tried to take hold of me; I shot him and he fell; I went farther abaft on deck towards the Government Agent's cabin; I then saw about a couple of dozen natives coming towards me from all sides; I could hear blows and scuffling abaft and dull sounds as if the natives were tomahawking the white men; the natives tried to lay hold of me and I fired four more shots; I saw one man fall and the others drew back as if they were killed or wounded; I had one shot left in my revolver; I then went down

"the forecandle, put on my trousers, filled my pocket with cartridges, took my Snider, and went on deck again; I went up the port lower rigging of the foremast as far as the foreyard; I could then see the natives running about with tomahawks; I then fired at all I could see; I may have fired a couple of dozen shots; I fired all I had but two; the firing continued for about ten or twelve minutes; the natives got under the awnings and I could not see them; I then went down on deck; during the time I was aloft I heard occasional shots under the awnings from the after part of the ship; before I came down on deck I saw two canoes which would hold about twenty each and several catamarangs; when I first came on deck some of the recruits were round the forecandle hatch and two were aloft; when I went on deck from aloft some of the recruits went and got bows and arrows from the galley, and one of the boat's crew, who was sick, had a Snider; I armed the recruits as well as I could, and placed some on one side of the ship and some on the other to keep the natives off; after I fired four or five shots some of the natives jumped overboard into the water; after I placed the recruits on each side of the ship I went over the top of the house abaft and saw three or four natives rushing round the house; I shot one from the top of the house; he was by the wheel and trying to get away from me; the others got away out of sight; the mate, Charles Marr, then sang out, "Is that you Tom?"; I replied "Yes, come out, I think the deck is cleared"; he then came out on deck and I jumped on the deck from the top of the house; I said to him "Look out there are some aboard yet"; we then searched the ship; we found one native hiding behind a coat; I shot him while he remained behind the coat; the shot went through the coat and shot him dead; I then saw the Government Agent lying on his back across the floor of his room; he was dead; we made a further search, but found no more natives aboard; the two canoes had then gone ashore, but there were several catamarangs alongside the ship with natives in them; I then took the ensign and made it fast to the fore-truck; that was the signal for the boats to return; I could not see the ship's boats then; during the search we saw the bodies of the carpenter and cook in a place on deck which we call the dining-room; it is between the two houses; the sailmaker was lying in the captain's room; he was not quite dead; he lived half-an-hour afterwards; he asked me to give him a drop of brandy; he was alive when the boats returned; he said something about his mother and a watch, but I could not make out what it was; he said nothing more; the carpenter and cook were breathing when I first saw them; they died in a few minutes afterwards; neither of them spoke; I saw the wounds on the body of the sailmaker; his left arm was cut in two, it was hanging by the flesh on the one side; the left side of his skull was lifted off the brain; his jaws were smashed and his teeth knocked in; his back was cut in pieces; the cook was cut across the forehead, his brains were running over his face; the carpenter was also cut on the front part of the head and had the brains running on his forehead; the Government Agent, Mr. Popham, had his face smashed in; that was the only wound I noticed on him; there were five natives and one recruit lying dead on the deck; I noticed gunshot wounds on one or two of the bodies; I don't know how the recruit got killed; he was cut about the head; the boats returned and we reported the matter to the captain; we then sewed the white men up and buried them in deep water, the others we put overboard; we then washed the decks and sailed that night for Maryborough, arriving at Woody Island on Tuesday last, the 1st instant; I noticed 2 or 3 tomahawks lying on the deck that did not belong to the ship; they must have belonged to the natives and had marks of blood on them.

Thomas Crittenden.

Taken and sworn before me at
Maryborough, this 7th day of June, 1886 A.D.

H.R. Buttenshaw, P.M.

Charles Henry Marr, on oath, saith:- I am the first mate on the "Young Dick" schooner, Captain John Hugh Rogers; we left Brisbane in April on a cruise to the South Seas to recruit; I remember our being off the island of Malayta in April last; I know Hornidge who was boatswain and recruiter; I recollect his going ashore at a place called Mabbo on the island of Malayta; he went ashore to try and recruit; he went in the recruiting boat with a man named Thomas Donnelly; Hornidge was in charge of the boat; the covering boat also went to the shore with Thomas Crittenden in charge; I heard shots fired from the boat when I was on board the ship; I think I heard two shots fired; I could not see what was going on ashore; the boats came towards the ship as fast as they could; we were anchored about 200 yards from the spot on shore where the boats went; when the boat arrived at the ship, I saw Hornidge was wounded; he had six different wounds; one of them on the back of the neck, four on the back, and one on the heel; they were cuts, and appeared to have been done with a tomahawk; the boats brought no recruits with them; the Government Agent was not in either of the boats; it was rainy weather; he had a slight touch of fever, and said he did not want to get wet; about 10 o'clock that morning we got under weigh, and sailed to Port Adam about 7 or 8 miles off; at this time we had some recruits on board, which we obtained from the south-east end of Malayta; we stayed at Port Adam several days, but did not get any recruits; we did not try to recruit there; we left Port Adam, went along the coast in a north-westerly direction; three days after, Hornidge was tomahawked; we saw H.M.S. "Opal" at Port Adam; the Commander and Doctor came on board; I don't know whether an inquiry was held on board the "Young Dick" by the Commander, Lieutenant Wright, with reference to the tomahawking of Hornidge; the "Opal" towed us back to Mabbo where Hornidge was tomahawked, and then fired some shots on shore which knocked down a cocoa-nut tree; the "Opal" then towed us out to sea, and we sailed along the coast in a north-westerly direction again; we arrived at a place called Pyramid Rock, a narrow passage that divides the island in two; we then went to Serago; we anchored about 150 yards from the beach; the boats went ashore soon after we anchored on the first day, and returned about half past five; the natives came on board that day, they swam from the shore, but nothing unusual occurred; it was on the 19th May last, that we arrived at Serago; on that day Captain Rogers as recruiter, and a man named Toohy went in the recruiting boat, and Lovett and Donnelly went in the covering boat; the Government Agent remained on board; the boats returned that day without any recruits; on the following day, the 20th May, the boats went from alongside at about 10 o'clock in the morning with the same men in the boats as on the previous day; the boats were in sight all the time they were ashore; when the boats left, there remained on board Thomas Crittenden, the carpenter William Bean, the cook Henry Merlin, the sailmaker Lagerbloom, the Government Agent, Mr. Popham, and myself; these were all the white men remaining on board; there were also fourteen recruits, and Bush, one of the ship's crew; there were no natives from shore on board when the ship's boats left; about half-an-hour after the boats left, I saw a canoe with six natives come from the shore on board; they all came on deck; I saw them on deck the night before; one of them said to me "One boy want to go along a Maryboro"; I went round to the Government Agent's cabin; the Government Agent was then sitting on a sofa reading a novel, and I said to him "Here is a boy wants to sign"; he replied "Fetch him round and I will sign him at once"; I then went back to the natives, and could then see others swimming from the land towards the ship; I should say there were about fifteen to twenty; at that time the sailmaker was standing alongside of myself; the cook Merlin, and the carpenter Bean were standing in the centre of the ship near the main hatch; the plan produced is a sketch of the deck of the

"Young Dick"; the ship was anchored with her starboard side nearest the island; the native who spoke to me before, and who was the only one who could speak English, said to me when I went back to him from the Government Agent's cabin "Big fellow master come and take my pay"; meaning the chief would come for the trade for the recruit; I went back and said to the Government Agent, "The chief is coming off to take the pay for the boy"; I then went to the trade-room, made up the trade and put it on the dining-room table before the chief came on board; two of the natives went back in the canoe, and returned with the chief; there were five altogether in the canoe the second time; during the time the canoe went ashore some of the natives swam to the ship, others came alongside in catamarangs; when the chief arrived on board there were about twenty-five natives on deck; they were quite naked, and I did not see anything about them; I then said to the native who spoke to me before, "Boy, come now and make me paper"; the boy who was then standing near me I took round to the door of the Government Agent's cabin; the other natives were then spread about over the deck; I left the boy and the native who had spoken to me outside the door of the Government Agent's cabin; I then went into the dining-room; the cook and the carpenter were there; I said to the carpenter, "Chips, look out for the trade", meaning the trade I had left on the table; I was standing with my hands on the table; the native who had spoken English before came round to the dining-room, passing the captain's cabin, and said to me, "Big fellow master want three more tomahawk"; as soon as he said that I stepped back from the table and shut the door of the boatswain's cabin, which had been made into a trade-room; when I went into the dining-room and spoke to the carpenter the chief was there with other natives; when I had closed the door I stood leaning against the upright in the passageway between the two rooms, looking at the trade on the dining-room table, with my face towards the natives; the chief then gave a yell and caught hold of me by the wrist of the left arm and higher up the arm, and another caught hold of my other arm and tried to pull me out of the dining-room; the chief then caught hold of the first finger of my left hand and bit it; it still bears the marks of the bite; I then freed myself of my one hand and hit the chief in the face with my fist; I then drew back into the doorway of my room, two natives still holding on to my one arm; with the other arm I reached across my bunk and got my revolver; I then fired at the chief and the other natives that had hold of my arm; they both dropped down; I believe they were dead; I was in the act of firing a third shot, the only one left in my revolver, when a native who was in the dining-room snatched the revolver from me; I then stepped back into my own room and shut the door half to; I then picked up a Snider and took two or three cartridges which were lying on my writing desk, loaded the Snider, and looking through the half-open door, saw a native with a tomahawk coming from the dining-room into the passage; I fired at him and he left the passage, ran on deck, and fell into the water; the tomahawk the native had was the first one I had seen; I was loading my Snider again when the room darkened; I then had my face to the door, and looking round saw a native with a tomahawk at the side window of my cabin; there are two windows in my cabin, one of which is on the side; the native was trying to tomahawk me; I turned round with my Snider to fire at him, but he was too quick for me, and got away; I had only one shot left, the cartridges being in the boatswain's room, which was then used as the trade-room; I then stepped across to that room as quick as I could and closed the door leaving sufficient space to fire through; I then saw a native coming along the rail on the port side with a tomahawk in his hand; I fired at him, and he dropped over the

"side; in trying to load the Snider again I found it broken and could not get the cartridge home; I was trying to fix it with a knife when I heard someone on the top of the house over my head, and I heard a white man sing out, "Come out, come out, they are retreating"; I then went outside of the room and saw Thomas Crittenden; he said "they have taken the boat with the same yell that they tackled us with", meaning the ship's boat; when I came out of the trade-room when Crittenden called me, I stepped over the dead bodies of the cook and the carpenter; they were lying on the floor of the dining-room; outside on deck on the starboard side I saw the dead bodies of the chief and the other native who I fired at first; I afterwards went into the dining-room for my opera glasses, and on passing along the deck I saw the dead body of the Government Agent on the floor of his cabin; there are two half-doors to the Government Agent's room, both of which were open; there are curtains over the door which were drawn back; I saw a native with a tomahawk crouching down behind the curtain on the end of the rope; I caught him by the wrist and tried to pull him out; he was greasy; he resisted and drew back to the corner again; I then caught him by the hair but was unable to drag him out; I sang out to Crittenden, "There is another one left with a tomahawk in his hand; fetch your Snider"; Crittenden then brought his Snider, and I stepped back while he fired; I then went forward and saw the boats with my glasses; I said to Crittenden, "The boats are alright, they are not taken"; I then ran the ensign up the foremast head, union down as a signal to return to the ship; he then placed Bush, who was wounded on a previous occasion, at the starboard cathead with a Snider, and told him to fire occasional shots to attract the ship's boats; I then sang out down the hatchway, "Where is the sailmaker", and Crittenden sang out "He is in the captain's room, dead"; I went to the captain's room and saw him lying on the floor, he was in a dying state; he was cut about the head and shoulders, as if from a tomahawk; I saw five natives lying dead, three on the starboard and two on the port side; the sailmaker lived about two hours after I first saw him; he sang out for his mother, and asked for a drop of brandy; after I fired the first shot from my revolver, but before I fired the second, I heard the Government Agent sing out from his cabin "Murder, murder"; when I first drew back into my cabin for my revolver, I saw the natives rush for the cook, and carpenter, and immediately afterwards I heard blows struck as if from a tomahawk; the attack on the Government Agent, cook, carpenter and myself occurred within a space of 12 square feet, and at the same time; as soon as the chief gave the yell it was repeated by all the natives all over the ship, and kept up for some time; there were no arms of any description found on the carpenter, and cook, neither the sailmaker; at the time of the attack it was Crittenden's watch below, and he was below in the forecabin asleep; the boats answered the signal and returned to the ship, between one and two in the afternoon; we sailed the same night after sewing the white men in canvas and burying them at sea; the natives were put overboard. I look at the plan exhibit. By the numbers - No. 1 is the captain's room; No. 2 is the Government Agent's room; No. 3 is my own room; No. 4 is the boatswain's room, which was made into a trade room; No. 5 is the dining-room showing the table I put the trade on just before the attack; the boats did not leave the ship again that day; they were used to tow the ship out and afterwards hoisted on the davits.

Taken and sworn before me at Maryborough
this 8th day of June, A.D. 1886.

C.H. Marr.

H.R. Buttanshaw.

" Charlie Gella says:- I belong "Young Dick"; me go along Government Agent's boat; me go long Malayta Island; me savvie boatswain and recruiter; he go ashore to one fellow boy me savvie; his name is Randie; me see boatswain and that fellow go long a bush; he stop long a bush one hour; both boats stop and wait for him; he came out bush, another fellow way, and walk down long a boat by himself; me no hear boatswain shoot long a bush; when boatswain come back he cut long a neck, long a back and long a foot; me see man-o'-war; master man-o'-war and doctor come on board; me savvie Serago, long island Malayta; we get six or seven fellow boy long a Serago; me savvie day four white fellow killed; me go long a Government Agent's boat that day; me no catch any boy long ashore then; me go back long a ship; me see Government Agent dead long a room belong to him; cook was dead long a room where Ki Ki; another white man dead long a captain's room, and another white man dead long a wheel abaft; me then pull ship long a boat and go away that night; me see two fellow boy dead long a Ki Ki room, and one fellow dead long a kitchen.

Taken before me at Maryborough,
this 8th day of June, A.D. 1886.
H.R. Buttanshaw.

his
Charlie x Gella.
mark

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Bush says:- Me belong Sandwich Island close up now; me belong Government boat on "Young Dick"; me savvie arrow strike me long a arm long Malayta; two fellow arrow shoot at me when me pull um boat; two fellow boys fire, one shoot long a bush, but me no see anyone long a bush.

his
Bush X
mark

+++++++

Charles Henry Marr, recalled, says:- After the massacre, on the 20th May, at Serago, I missed my own revolver, the Government Agent's revolver, and the captain's rifle; the trade was on the floor of the dining-room, and I cannot tell whether any was taken or not; the natives left two tomahawks covered with blood, and one tomahawk with a leaf tied on it to hide the blade.

Taken before me at Maryborough,
this 9th day of June, A.D. 1886.
H. R. Buttanshaw.

C.H. Marr.

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Bush, recalled, says:- It was one day after the man-o'-war left that I was struck with the arrow; we got them at the place where I was wounded, but before I was wounded; we had no quarrel with the natives while we were getting the recruits; I was in one of the boats close to the shore when I was wounded; there were three boys on the shore; two went into the bush, and when the arrow was fired at me the other boy went away; I had my face towards the shore at the time I was wounded; I was pulling the boat from the shore to the ship; we pulled back to the ship, because the natives were enticing us ashore and we thought there was something wrong; I did not see the boy who fired the arrow; the other boat's crew fired three shots after I was wounded; it was about a mile from the place where I was wounded to the place where we got the three recruits; there is a water passage between the two places; we did not get any recruits after I was wounded; we went away the same night to the other side of the island; I was sick and did not go in the boats;

Thus ended the official inquiry into the massacre on board the "Young Dick". Rear Admiral Tryon in Sydney was, however, seriously perturbed at the massacre and its effect on future recruitment of labour in the Solomon Islands, and especially in the island of Malaita, where the people of Serago offered a reward of 100,000 porpoise-teeth to any village which should capture a ship, and a smaller sum for the body of a single European, and he called for a report from Captain Brooke on the state of affairs in that island.

In consequence, the following report was made by Captain Brooke on the 29th June, 1886:-

" Labour schooner "Young Dick".
H.M.S. "Opal", Sydney, 29 June, 1886.

Sir,

In accordance with your directions to forward you some remarks on the state of affairs on the island of Malayta with regard to the late outrages committed there, and especially to the attack made by the natives on the labour schooner "Young Dick", last May, I would beg to state that during my last visit to the Solomon Islands I had heard right through that the Malayta natives were the most treacherous and least to be trusted, at the present time, of all natives in the Solomon Group.

That several outrages had been committed, some years ago, at different points on the east coast of Malayta, and more notably the case of the "Janet Stewart", labour schooner, that was attacked by the natives, and all the crew killed and eaten (close to, I presume, the place the "Young Dick" was attacked on 20th May last); and that as far as I can learn none of these murders and outrages have been dealt with by act of war.

On this account, and also finding it necessary to take action in the case of the attempted murder of J. Hornidge, boatswain of the schooner "Young Dick", at Roas Bay, east coast of Malayta, on 9 May last, I recommended the captains of the labour schooners "Young Dick" and "Meg Merrilies" to leave the island for a time and not recruit there for the present. Their answer was - that it was the best recruiting ground, that all was quiet, and the Captain of the "Meg Merrilies" also said, that he knew the natives well all round, and felt quite safe.

With regard to the attacks made by natives on the "Young Dick", after she parted company with H.M.S. "Opal" on 9th May last, I am decidedly of opinion that these outrages were not caused by retaliation or inadequacy (which has been implied) of the punishment inflicted by my orders on chief Tara Koke and his tribe for the attempted murder of Hornidge, at Roas Bay, for these reasons; I was given to understand, and there is no doubt, that tribal warfare exists in a great degree on Malayta Island, and one tribe has no sympathy for the other; and besides, I question whether the news of the action of the "Opal", on 9th May last, would have reached the spot described in evidence of Captain Rogers and survivors of the "Young Dick", where this late attack occurred.

In this evidence there is a circumstance, to my mind, that wants more fully clearing up. In Charles Marr's statement, when the chief gave a yell and caught hold of him by the wrist, had he (Charles Marr) in any way provoked him, either by threats or otherwise, with the exception of refusing the three extra tomahawks? Also, knowing the schooner was short-handed at the time, was any extra look-out kept and any precaution taken to prevent the natives coming on board in numbers and with arms?

" With regard to a man-of-war visiting this spot for inquiry or otherwise, I would beg to remark that during the time of the south-east trade, it would be unfavourable for taking action on the coast of Malayta; and also, it would be necessary for some one cognizant of the exact spot to be able to point it out, as there are so many small villages dotted along the coast, and a good number not visible from deck of ship on account of thick bush and trees.

In conclusion, I beg to express the regret of myself, and all officers of this ship, at the death of Mr. Popham, and so many of the crew of the schooner "Young Dick", under such fearful circumstances. I have twice had dealings with Mr. Popham, and I had reason to believe that he was a good and zealous Government Agent, and appeared to have good experience, and acted fairly with the natives. From all I saw, I considered that Captain Rogers and all on board the "Young Dick" had done their best to act honestly and rightly with these people, and his ship appeared in good order and well fitted out for what was required of her.

I have &c.,
Arthur T. Brooke,
Captain. "

Insofar as the punishment of the villagers of Roas is concerned, part of the following letter from the Rev. R.B. Comins, of the Mission vessel "Southern Cross", to Captain Brooke of H.M.S. Opal is of interest:-

" Mission Vessel "Southern Cross", off Ellawa,
Solomon Islands, 17 May, 1886.

My dear Sir,

I called in at Saa today, and landed, and had a long talk with my people about the result of your bombardment of the village of Roas, on the 8th inst. They tell me that some Roas people have been staying at Saa since then, who declared that not a single man was hit or injured personally by your fire, but their village is in ruins, every house destroyed, and a great many of their cocoa-nut and fruit trees. They had all cleared out of the village into the dense bush, but were prepared (so they say) to have had a shot at any party of men you might have landed. They seem to have been suitably impressed with the punishment you have given them, which there is no doubt they thoroughly deserved..... Believe me &c.,

Richd. Blundell Comins".

It is somewhat difficult to accept at face value the allegations of the people of Roas regarding the ruination of their village and the devastation of a large part of their crops. First, the commanding officer of H.M.S. Opal had no sight of the village which was hidden away in the bush, and it is therefore difficult to believe that the fire from the man-of-war could have been so accurate. Secondly, the commanding officer admitted that neither canoes nor cocoa-nuts could be seen. Thirdly, the country is described by the commanding officer as being of "dense, high and thick forest and no house or village could be seen from the ship". Fourthly, according to the captain of the "Young Dick", only some "fifteen or sixteen shells" were fired and, having regard to the armament on board H.M.S. Opal their effect would not have been such as to cause the damage alleged. Fifthly, Marr, the first mate, states that the warship "fired some shots on shore which knocked down a cocoa-nut tree" - perhaps an exaggeration in reverse, but suggesting but little damage. Probably the allegations of the

natives were considerably exaggerated in order to win the sympathy of the missionary, who would have known that the rebuilding of the native huts comprising the small village would have been no serious problem if communally tackled.

As the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific had a general supervision over various island groups, including the Solomon Islands, Rear-Admiral Tryon addressed the former's Assistant as follows:-

" Sir,

H.M.S. "Nelson", Sydney, 3 July, 1886.

I beg to forward to Your Excellency copies of letters and evidence which have been forwarded to me by His Excellency the Administrator of Queensland respecting the circumstances of attacks by natives on the labour schooner "Young Dick", in May, 1886, at Malayta in the Solomon Islands (5 June to 22 June, 1886). A copy of a letter, dated 29 June, 1886, from Captain Brooke, H.M.S. Opal, is also attached.

2. This schooner, well found and fitted, with a Government Agent and master against whose conduct not one word is alleged, was recruiting on an island where our influence for good has not been felt by the natives. It appears that within a brief period three cases of violence occurred. In the first instance, the boatswain - the recruiter - left his boat, and accompanied by a native, went into the bush. According to the evidence of white men he was away but a few minutes - according to natives, half an hour to an hour. He returned, having been severely tomahawked in the back. He had fired his revolver, but the shot had not been heard by those in the boats. He had a narrow escape and owes his recovery to the accidental arrival of H.M.S. "Opal" on the spot. He was received on board, treated by the surgeon, and conveyed to Townsville.

3. Shortly after this case the schooner proceeds to another place, a few miles on, where she procured three recruits, and then the natives endeavoured to entice a boat's crew sent ashore to enlist another recruit, within their power; but they, suspecting something, pulled away, whereupon the natives showered arrows at them, one of which wounded one of the boat's crew. The schooner then weighed, and went yet a little further on, and sent her boat away. On the first day nothing particular occurred, no recruits were obtained, the boat's crew talked with the natives on shore, and two or three dozen natives visited the ship when they were away. On the second day the boats went away again, leaving six white men on board - the Government Agent, mate, cook, carpenter, sailmaker, and an able seaman. Shortly after the boats left, the natives began to come on board. At first they were quite naked and appeared friendly. The Government Agent was in his cabin, the A.B. asleep in the fore-castle. The natives were freely admitted on board. Some came in a canoe and others swam on a catamaran. A boy proffered to recruit. The canoe was sent on shore to bring off a chief, or head man, to receive the usual "trade" gear. The door of the cabin that contained the trade was open, and the trade to be given taken out and placed on a table. The chief arrived, three more tomahawks were demanded, whereupon the mate closed the open door of the trade-cabin, and almost at once the chief, with other unarmed natives, seized hold of the mate, and the struggle and massacre began; it commenced with the mate and the chief and extended.

4. I am given to understand that at Cooktown it was stated that the mate pushed the chief before he acted as above referred to. However that may be, the only living European witness is the mate himself.

"5. This horrid case occurred but a few days after Captain Brooke, in H.M.S. "Opal", quitted the island, after having fired some shell towards a village occupied by those who committed the assault on the boatswain. Captain Brooke informs me that he advised the captains of the "Meg Merrilies" and "Young Dick" not to proceed in the direction where they subsequently went, owing to the action that had been taken, and to the disposition of the natives. He also embarked the Rev. R.B. Comins for the same reason, and Bishop Selwyn, who he met shortly afterwards, expressed the opinion that what had been done would be attended with good effect. The "Meg Merrilies" preceded the "Young Dick" on her northern voyage, but it is not known what experience she had.

6. We have in this case a schooner with a Government Agent, who appeared to be a very fit person, so keen to obtain labour that the captain and crew risked their lives and their vessel to obtain it among natives well known to be treacherous and cruel.

7. No precautions whatever were taken by those left on board. On the contrary, the natives who were so greatly distrusted by those in the boats were freely admitted on board. It may have been that the trade gear exposed to view awakened the cupidity of the natives. Whatever was the cause, an opportunity was rashly and most imprudently offered to men of the same race, living on the same island, who on two previous occasions, within but a few days interval, had, it is represented, treacherously assaulted a portion of the crew.

8. On the one hand, in the islands, we have missionaries who are gradually establishing free and safe communication with the natives; on the other we have men in pursuit of trade forcing themselves on the natives, obtaining recruits by payments to head men, according to prevailing custom.

9. It appears to me, sad and distressing as this case is, those in the schooner taking their lives in their own hands in defiance of warning, and also of apprehension that within all reason should have been awakened by previous and recent experience, voluntarily withdraw themselves from the protection of laws of their own country, and for purposes of their own put themselves carelessly in the power of natives, who on their part were also incited in pursuit of gain to obtain it at any cost. It is probable that the whole of the natives on that part of the island would have done the same if they could, and if an opportunity was afforded.

10. The question now is, what should be done? I see no clear evidence to establish that the natives premeditated the attack. There is some to lead me to suppose it might have been effected on the spur of the moment.

11. Captain Brooke reports that the part of the island he visited was one dense, high thick forest - no villages to be seen; the bush penetrated by native tracks that can be followed by men proceeding in Indian file. In cases where the natives feel they have done wrong they disappear in the bush, while those who do not flock to the beach. It is impossible to hope to catch an actual offender, or that offenders would be given up under any pressure that can be brought to bear, though it is possible, it has been represented to me, that a chief or head man might give up others, falsely representing that they were offenders.

12. Schooners recruiting obtain a few recruits here and a few there. This trade cannot be practically supervised on the spot.

"The knowledge of our language is extending fast, and the care and protection given to individuals has increased of late years; and I am informed that there are instances in which natives have preferred to remain in Queensland after their term of agreement has expired. This has been noted as a proof that their treatment is not unsatisfactory to themselves, but it may be that they recall that in the first instance the head men, who first sent them away on receipt of payment, and that they have no desire to fall into their clutches again; but on the other hand the natives whence they came know not why they do not return, and they blame the white man; and more than one retaliatory act on the part of the natives has been attributed to the non-return of natives at the proper time.

13. It is certain if a man-of-war goes to well-wooded islands where natives have done wrong, no natives will be seen so soon as a force lands. It is most improbable that the right men could be punished. The bush offers a ready means of escape, and white men following a track, whether with or without a guide, could do little, and would be placed in a position to which they should not be exposed without strong reason. Does it exist in this case, in which by reason of rashness and incaution, to say the least, white men in pursuit of gain have taken their lives in their own hands, and have placed themselves unarmed in the power of natives known to be treacherous and evil-disposed, and whose ways we, so far, have not mended.

14. On the other hand it may be held that it is not unlawful to engage in "labour" trade, and men employed on what is lawful, and among savages, should be protected or allowed to take the law into their own hands. This latter is quite inadmissible- the argument cannot apply beyond certain limits. We can only proceed by act of war, and that within certain restrictions, such as may be described as punitive measures. If it was regular war or conquest that was meditated, the justification of exposing the lives of those acting for the purpose would be fully justified by the result, and the destruction of life and property to obtain a desired end would be but a natural sequence to the proceedings.

15. In this instance the natives must feel that they suffered severely at the hands of two courageous white men. They obtained no plunder. They, and those who hear of it, will hesitate before they endeavour to plunder a vessel, and vessels will read the lesson, already too oft repeated, that it is but right to themselves, and but right to the natives, to take proper precautions.

16. Should I hereafter determine to send a vessel with the view, if possible, and without undue risk, to punish the offending natives, and if it is found not reasonably practicable to do so - will more harm than good arise? How will the presence of a man-of-war in face of an offending people, not striking, affect the future?

17. The inhabitants of New Ireland are accessible. In portions of it they have been punished, and taken to heart the lesson, and that part of the island I am told was early this year safe to all. The inhabitants of New Britain, on the contrary, have been taught how to avoid those sent against them, and have learnt even how to strike those who seek them in the bush, and with their confidence to escape punishment their boldness has increased; and it is on this point especially, as well as on the whole subject, I ask Your Excellency's counsel.

"18. These natives clearly distinguish the difference between trading vessels, labour vessels, the mission vessel, and men-of-war. On the approach of the "Opal" to an anchorage off a village that contained men who were guilty of having put white men to death, the actual offenders were on board a trader at anchor there. So soon as the man-of-war came in sight they jumped overboard and disappeared in the bush; and traders and all concurred it was impossible to secure them.

I have &c.,

G. Tryon,
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. "

The counsel of the Assistant High Commissioner in his letter to Rear-Admiral Tryon of the 29th July was brief and to the point, though hardly of much help. He stated that he shared the view of Bishop Selwyn that what had been done at the village of Roas would be "attended with good effect", and felt that the demand for the surrender of Radi and the other culprits should be repeated whenever a man-of-war visited the area.

Meanwhile the labour vessel "Flora" had called in at Sinerango (Serago) to recruit labour for Queensland not long after the "Young Dick" massacre. Some 30 recruits were signed on, the natives expecting that a man-of-war would make a punitive expedition to the area and that the safest place for the recruits, who had all been involved in the massacre in one way or another, would be Queensland. As it happened the "Flora" dropped anchor in the Herbert River off Dungeness only a stone's throw from where the "Young Dick" was at anchor. Douglas Rannie, himself a Queensland Government Agent, in his book "My Adventures amongst South Sea Cannibals", published in London in 1912, recounts how, after the Inspector and Health Officer had examined and passed the recruits on board the "Flora" on which he had been serving, Marr, the mate of the "Young Dick", paid a visit to the "Flora"; he tells how -

"While in conversation on the deck of the Flora, Marr suddenly recognized and with a loud exclamation pointed to one of the recruits, who as suddenly disappeared below. He said that he identified him as one of the savages who took a leading part in the massacre of the Young Dick's people at Sinerango; but search the ship as he might, Marr could not find his man. He was all the time in hiding in an empty beef-cask, and there he remained for the best part of the time that the Young Dick remained at Dungeness".

Not long afterwards, about 150 labourers, whose contracts had expired, arrived to board the "Young Dick" for repatriation to New Ireland. The vessel sailed a day or two later. When the "Young Dick" left, the weather looked dull and threatening, and squalls began to come up from the south-east. The pilot, who had taken the vessel as far as the fairway buoy, advised Captain Rogers to anchor under the lee of the Palm Islands for the night and not to attempt the passage until the weather cleared. Whether the advice of the pilot was followed will, however, never be known for the "Young Dick" and its captain and crew were never seen again.

A piece of wreckage, about 18 feet by 16 feet, comprising the upper deck of a vessel about 16 feet beam, and two sides of a deck house about 7 feet in height, were found in the sea near Cooktown and examined by Lieutenant Commander Pullen and his officers of H.M.S. "Lark" on the 22nd July; and in a despatch to the Admiralty No. 393 dated the 19th August, Rear-Admiral Tryon reported that it belonged to

the labour schooner "Young Dick", which had on board at the time 130 or 140 native labourers on a return voyage to their islands, and must be presumed to be lost. Indeed, a report in the Sydney Morning Herald, datelined Brisbane the 24th August, stated:-

"A board, with letters painted on it, being portion of the wreckage recently picked up near Cooktown, has been identified at Maryborough by a local painter as his handiwork. No doubt now remains that the wreckage belonged to the labour schooner "Young Dick", and that all on board must have perished".

Further, coasting steamers afterwards passed a quantity of wreckage, principally consisting of the portions of red deal boxes, usually made for islanders returning to their islands from Queensland. And one vessel reported that it had passed the corpse of a red-haired man floating in the water, which answered the description of Captain Rogers. Many days afterwards a raft drifted ashore on Hinchbrook Island, and was secured by a tribe of aboriginals there. They reported their find to the Customs authorities at Dungeness and stated that there were two black men on the raft when it was stranded, but that one of them had died almost immediately after the stranding, whilst the other made for the bush. They had tracked him down but only to find his dead body. The Customs authorities accompanied the aboriginals to Hinchbrook Island, and identified the two dead men as Pacific islanders. And they noted that there was a mast on the raft to which was attached bunting, which, on reference to the signal book, read "In distress, want assistance". The flags plainly showed that some white man acquainted with the code had survived the wreck but no trace of him was ever found.

Meanwhile, on the 15th September, Rear-Admiral Tryon wrote to Captain Clayton of H.M.S. "Diamond" as follows:-

" Memorandum. "Opal", at Sydney, 15 September, 1886.

With reference to the case of the "Young Dick", the apprehension of Radi and other culprits is suggested by the Assistant High Commissioner. If the apprehension can be effected, no doubt it is desirable, but I observe he does not suggest further active hostilities. I concur also in this view, if only on account that long continued work of destruction without effecting the apprehension of criminals, would involve the coast in a state of indiscriminate war of natives against whites, which would probably lead to further loss of life, and you have no power to prevent white men visiting the scene on their own account and responsibility.

2. In the second case of the "Young Dick", the outcome of rashness and imprudence, to say the least, the case is one of gross treachery, and it is impossible to forget that it is but a repetition of what has occurred in other instances. In this case it is probable the natives suffered severely at the time, but it is not sufficient that they should feel they cannot act as they did, and escape with such injury as they may receive at the hands of men who are acting in self-defence.

3. It is to be feared that the reported loss of the "Young Dick" with all hands is true, and that it will prevent your personal communication with witnesses of the first importance, but there is reason to hope that you may be able to fix the responsibility of this act of treachery on the right persons, and if so, of punishing them, capturing the most culpable if you are able to fix the blame on one more than another.

G. Tryon,
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. "

It was not until over a month later, however, that Captain Clayton submitted his report on the case as follows:-

"Captain Clayton, H.M.S. "Diamond" to Rear-Admiral Tryon.
Case of the attack on the "Young Dick", labour vessel.

"Diamond", at Ugi (Solomon Islands),
23 October, 1886.

Sir, I beg to report my proceedings in the "Young Dick" case:-

1. After getting interpreters from the mission station at Ulawa (an island 30 miles S.E. of Malayta), I proceeded along to the N.E. coast of Malayta. Off Ai yo (spelt Iyoh on the chart), I succeeded in getting a man to show me where the attack on the "Young Dick" took place, and I arrived there at 3 p.m. on 19th October. It proves to be a very fine harbour, and a sketch survey of it will be forwarded. It is known as Sinalaka. (This is properly the name of the district in the south-west part of the harbour). Serago is the name given to Port Adam; but is apparently unknown to the north-west.

2. With the aid of the Ai-yo man and a native who came to my boat, I ascertained that the attack was made in the N.W. arm of the harbour. The people engaged in it came from the district of Tet-shi-fau at the head of the arm. I tried in vain to communicate with the natives of this part of the harbour. No villages or houses were visible, and the natives said it was two hours' walk to them, and even if we reached them we should find no one, as all had taken to the bush.

3. The natives of the Sinalaka district showed themselves near the ship, and talked to us at a distance. They said "they had not killed any white men, and were not afraid of us". As they showed themselves within rifle-shot I am inclined to think this is the case.

4. I do not think a man-of-war has the least chance of getting at the guilty people or their property, even the cocoa-nut groves being high up the hills, and no canoes visible. The arrival of a man-of-war is the signal for them to take to the bush, where it is absolutely impossible to follow them.

In this part of Malayta there do not appear to be any large villages, single houses and clusters of two or three being scattered all about the mountains, which here rise to about 2,000 feet.

5. After remaining thirty-six hours, and trying repeatedly to communicate with the Tet-shi-fau men, I left, as I considered a longer stay with no result would have a bad effect.

6. I arrived at Port Adam at 5 p.m. on 21st October, and on the 22nd proceeded to Mabbo (or Roas), 8 miles to the south of Port Adam. It is a good sized bay but open to the south-east. No signs of houses anywhere.

I got into communication with the people, assisted by Dosawewe, chief at Saa. The chief Tara Koke has died since the visit of the "Opal" in May last. Kale-ema is now chief, but has apparently very little authority.

I insisted that he should give up Radi, the man who attacked the boatswain of the "Young Dick". He was actually on the beach and talked to us with a crowd of other natives. I had great hopes of capturing him at first, but without making an attack, which I did not feel authorized to do, I found myself unable to do so. The bush was so close that he would have vanished before we could have caught him and as actual murder had not been committed I could not allow him to be shot.

" The inhabitants of Roas appear to consider that the punishment inflicted by the "Opal" has closed the matter, but I explained to them that Radi must still be given up, but I do not think they will do so.

I consider that the punishment has had a very good effect on the inhabitants of Roas.

I have &c.

Francis S. Clayton,

Captain and Senior Officer, Northern Division. "

It was, however, nearly two months later, in response to a signal from the Admiralty, that Rear-Admiral Tryon, C.B., addressed the Secretary to the Admiralty regarding the case of the "Young Dick", as follows:-

" Letter No. 606 of 14 December, 1886.

The case of the "Young Dick".

1. As to the wounding of J. Hornidge, boatswain, for which the natives have been sufficiently punished by Captain Brooke, of H.M.S. "Opal".
2. The attack on the vessel by natives while trading for a man who was about to recruit.

"Nelson", at sea, latitude $41^{\circ} 6' S.$,
longitude $148^{\circ} 59' E.$

In response to their Lordships' telegram of 2nd November, 1886, No. 30, I enclose the "Young Dick" case in extenso.....

2. As to the attack on Hornidge, the reasons for the attack are possibly those assigned in the Rev. Mr. Comins's letter.
3. Captain Brooke recommended the "Meg Merrilies" and "Young Dick" not to continue to recruit on the island of Malajta for the present owing to its disturbed state, but they preferred to act on their own opinions. With reference to the attack itself, while I am not convinced there is evidence to establish that the attack was premeditated, and even if it is possible that there was some wrangle as to the amount that was to be paid for a recruit, still there are so many cases so nearly the same, in the Station records, that it seems to be established that these natives at this time, if an opportunity is afforded them to do so, would act as they did on their own initiative, as appears to have been the case in this instance.
4. On this occasion they suffered severely, whether sufficiently so to check them for the future I know not, but no lesson however severe will make the white men feel their responsibility, or make them to be habitually more guarded.
5. In this instance those on board were well acquainted with the previous cases and experiences. They were no novices at the trade.
6. The vessel arrived in the islands from Queensland, 29th April. On 2nd May her boatswain was tomahawked at Mabbo. Her captain, regardless of warnings, and taking no special precaution, continued on his cruise, calling at different places on the same island, anchoring every few miles; and at Ihichoni, 20 miles from Mabbo, the captain, when in a boat, was suddenly assailed by a shower of arrows, one of which wounded one of his crew. Continuing his cruise, on the 20th of the same month, his vessel was assailed at Serago, 15 or 16 miles only from his last adventure. On this occasion six white men were on board, including the Government Agent, besides fourteen recruits, and one of the crew, a native - a number sufficient with ordinary precautions to hold the vessel safe. The natives were admitted freely on board, no precaution whatever was taken, and the store of trade was exposed to view.

"7. It will be observed that the vessel had already recruited some fourteen men, not one of whom endeavoured to escape, as well they might. It is probable that being removed, though but a few miles, from the land which belonged to their tribe or community they knew they would not be safe among the neighbouring ones, and dare not trust themselves ashore.

8. It appears that while the island of Malayta has been the scene of several similar cases, it is an island that is regarded as one of the best recruiting grounds.

9. I fear that to disputes in the labour traffic, and to the non-return of natives, and to former illegal acts, may be attributed the vast majority of the sad cases that occur.

G. Tryon,
Rear-Admiral. "

The famous author Joseph Conrad is said once to have remarked "Its not the ships, its the men in them". How truly he spoke of the "Young Dick". Rear-Admiral Tryon has been quoted as remarking -

"This schooner, well found and fitted, with a Government Agent and master against whose conduct not one word is alleged, was recruiting...."

But, if ever there was a case in which the captain, the recruiter, mate and the Government Agent had only themselves to blame for the disasters which overtook them, the case of the "Young Dick" provides the evidence. Apart from their individual misjudgments and faults, Rear-Admiral Tryon was sadly only too correct in stating -

"...no lesson however severe will make the white men feel their responsibility, or make them to be habitually more guarded.

In this instance those on board were well acquainted with the previous cases and experiences. They were no novices at the trade".

The boatswain, John Hornidge, the recruiter, was wholly to blame for almost being murdered by allowing himself to be lured ashore - and into the bush - merely in order to interview a single potential recruit. His naivety seems incredible. He could so easily have demanded that the intending recruit should be brought down to the shore.

Captain Rogers must bear the blame for certain midjudgments and faults; thus -

- (1) from the comparative proximity of the place where Hornidge was nearly murdered and those places where he intended to recruit, Captain Rogers should reasonably have concluded that news of the Mabbo incident would have been relayed to the other places, and rendered his pursuit to engage further recruits along the coast likely to end, if not in disaster, at least in serious trouble;
- (2) he was specifically warned by Captain Brooke that, in view of what had occurred at Mabbo, it would be most unwise for him to continue recruiting, yet he rejected that advice;
- (3) despite the first two occurrences - at Mabbo, and when the ship's boats were showered later with arrows - he apparently gave no orders, before taking the ship's boats into the shore at Serago, to ensure that the first mate and the others left on board took full precautions to anticipate and be prepared to deal with any native acts of treachery aboard; and,
- (4) finally, despite the advice of the pilot at Dungeness that he should not attempt to take the "Young Dick" through the passage in the reef until the weather cleared, it must be assumed in the light of what transpired that he rejected that advice as a result of which he, his crew and some 150 natives lost their lives.

The first mate, Marr, must bear a large share of the blame for the massacre at Serago; thus -

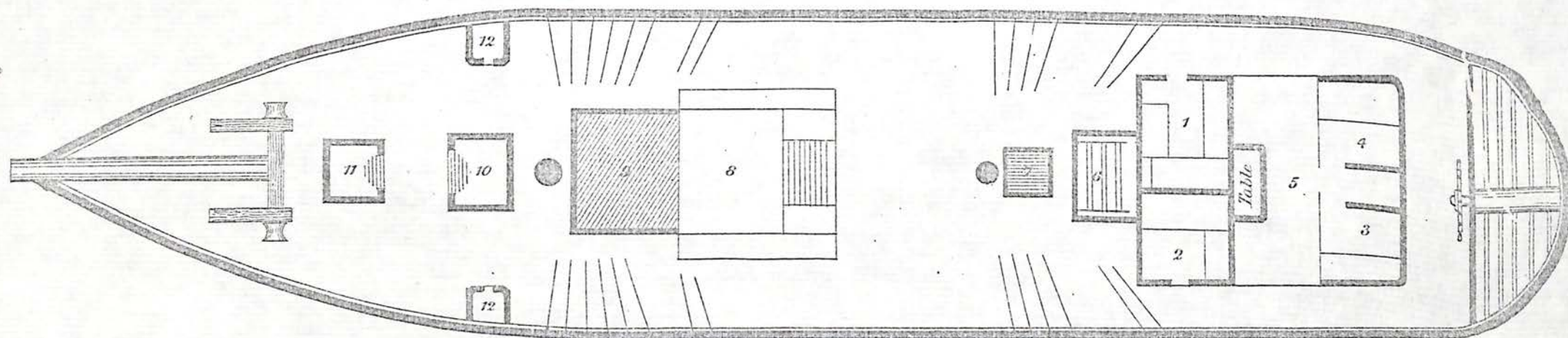
- (1) despite the first two incidents, which were doubtless well known to those at Serago as well as to Marr, he apparently failed to take any precautions, either personally or in respect of his crew and those left on board, in anticipation of any attack or other trouble which might be made by the natives at Serago;
- (2) the foregoing is particularly noteworthy since, on the occasion of the second incident when the ship's boats were showered with arrows, those in the boats distrusted the natives to such an extent that they refused their invitation to go ashore and recruit; Marr should have taken the hint from this incident;
- (3) despite the first two incidents, Marr made no attempt to limit the number of natives boarding the vessel at Serago, either on the first day when the natives might well have been spying out the land and being encouraged to make their attack on the second day, when the massacre occurred. On both occasions some two dozen natives crowded on board, many of whom should have been told to stay in their canoes or catamarans;
- (4) neither Marr nor anyone else appears to have undertaken any check as to whether the natives who boarded the schooner were armed. Marr states that the twenty-five natives on deck "were quite naked". That is indeed possible but fails to explain a remark of Thomas Crittenden, after the massacre:-
"I noticed two or three tomahawks lying on the deck which did not belong to the ship; they must have belonged to the natives, and had marks of blood on them".
Further, Marr himself admits that one native tried to tomahawk him through his cabin window and that there was a native hiding in the captain's cabin armed with a tomahawk;
- (5) his open display of all the trade goods in the trade-room with its open doors may very well have aroused the cupidity of the natives; and,
- (6) apart from stating that all the natives on deck at the time of the massacre were naked, Marr also states of the native hidden in the captain's cabin that "he was greasy". That is of some significance in that natives were known to smear themselves with coconut oil thus preventing capture as such a native was as slippery as an eel. If one or more natives were "greasy", i.e. smeared with coconut oil, Marr should have noticed and assumed that mischief was intended.

Further, after the first two incidents, it might reasonably have been expected that the Government Agent, a responsible officer of sound judgment, would have uttered warnings about the extension of recruiting after the incident at Mabbo. Mention is made that he was not entirely well, but Marr, in his evidence at the inquiry, said, just before the massacre:-

"I went round to the Government Agent's cabin; the Government Agent was then sitting on a sofa reading a novel" which hardly sounds as though he were seriously ill. Further, the Government Agent must have heard or sensed the large number of natives allowed on deck on the first day at Serago, and uttered a warning in view of the previous incidents.

The only hero of the massacre was able seaman Thomas Crittenden who fought the natives in greatly superior numbers almost single-handed, though it is clear from the reward later offered by the people of Serago that his very success inspired a determination of the natives to gain revenge for their dead companions.

DECK PLAN OF SCHOONER "YOUNG DICK," 162 TONS.



Scale, $\frac{1}{8}$ " to the foot

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Captain. | 2. Gov. Agent. |
| 3. Mate. | 4. Boatswain. |
| 5. Dining Room. | 6. Hatch. |
| 7. Tank. | 8. Main Hatch. |
| 9. Galley. | 10. Fore Hatch. |
| 11. Forecastle. | 12. Closets. |