When I was first learning the ropes as a "recruiter" in the Kanaka labour trade, recruiting natives to work on the plantations of Samoa and Fiji, we called at a group of islands called Nisan by the natives, and marked on the chart as the Sir Charles Hardy Islands. I thought it likely that I might obtain a few "recruits," and the captain wanted fresh provisions.

The group lies between the south end of New Ireland and the north end of the great Bougainville Island in the Solomon Archipelago, and consists of six low, well-wooded and fertile islands, enclosed within a barrier reef, forming a noble atoll, almost circular in shape. All the islands are thickly populated at the present day by natives, who are peaceable enough, and engage in _beche-de-mer_ and pearl-shell fishing. Less than forty years back they were notorious cannibals, and very warlike, and never hesitated to attempt to cut off any whaleship or trading vessel that was not well manned and well armed.

As I had visited the group on three previous occasions in a trading vessel and was well known to the people, I was pretty sure of getting some "recruits" for Samoa, for our vessel had a good reputation. So, lowering our boats, the second mate and I went on shore, and were pleasantly received. But, alas for my hopes! I could not get a single native to recruit. They were, they said, now doing so well at curing _beche-de-mer_ for a Sydney trading vessel that none of the young men cared to leave the island to work on a plantation for three years; in addition to this, never before had food been so plentiful--pigs and poultry abounded, and turtle were netted by hundreds at a time. In proof of their assertion as to the abundance of provisions, I bought from them, for trade goods worth about ten dollars, a boat-load of turtle, pigs, ducks, fowls, eggs and fish. These I sent off to the ship by the second mate, and told him to return for another load of bread-fruit, taro, and other vegetables and fruit. I also sent a note to the captain by my own boat, telling him to come on shore and bring our guns and plenty of cartridges, as the islands were alive with countless thousands of fine, heavy pigeons, which were paying the group their annual visit from the mountainous forests of Bougainville Island and New Ireland. They literally swarmed on a small uninhabited island, covered with bread-fruit and other trees, and used by the natives as a sort of pleasure resort.

The two boats returned together, and leaving the second mate to buy more pigs and turtle--for we had eighty-five "recruits" on board to feed, as well as the ship's company of twenty-eight persons--the skipper and I started off in my boat for the little island, accompanied by several young Nisan "bucks" carrying old smooth-bore muskets, for they, too, wanted to join in the sport I had given them some tins of powder, shot, and a few hundred military caps. We landed on a beautiful white beach, and telling our boat's crew to return to the village and help the second mate, the skipper and I, with the Nisan natives, walked up the bank, and in a few minutes the guns were at work. Never before had I seen such thousands of pigeons in so small an area. It could hardly be called sport, for the birds were so thick on the trees that when a native fired at haphazard into the branches the heavy charge of shot would bring them down by the dozen--the remainder would simply fly off to the next tree. Owing to the dense foliage the skipper and I seldom got a shot at them.
on the wing, and had to slaughter like the natives, consoling ourselves with the fact that every bird would be eaten.

Most of them were so fat that it was impossible to pluck them without the skin coming away, and from the boat-load we took on board the skip's cook obtained a ten-gallon keg full of fat.

About noon we ceased, to have something to eat and drink, and chose for our camp a fairly open spot, higher than the rest of the island, and growing on which were some magnificent trees, bearing a fruit called vi. It is in reality a wild mango, but instead of containing the smooth oval-shaped seed of the mango family, it has a round, root-like and spiky core. The fruit, however, is of a delicious flavour, and when fully ripe melts in one's mouth. Whilst our native friends were grilling some birds, and getting us some young coco-nuts to drink, the captain and I, taking some short and heavy pieces of wood, began throwing them at the ripe fruit overhead. Suddenly my companion tripped over something and fell.

"Hallo, what is this?" he exclaimed, as he rose and looked at the cause of his mishap.

It was the end of a bar of pig-iron ballast, protruding some inches out of the soft soil. We worked it to and fro, and then pulled it out. Wondering how it came there, we left it and resumed our stick-throwing, when we discovered three more on the other side of the tree; they were lying amid the ruins of an old wall, built of coral-stone slabs. We questioned the natives as to how these "pigs" came to be there. They replied that, long before their time, a small vessel had come into the lagoon and anchored, and that the crew had thrown the bars of iron overboard. After the schooner had sailed away, the natives had dived for and recovered the iron, and had tried to soften the bars by fire in the hope of being able to turn it into axes, etc.

We accepted the story as true, and thought no more about it, though we wondered why such useful, compact and heavy ballast should be thrown away, and when my boat returned to take us to the ship, we took the iron "pigs" with us.

Arriving at Samoa, we soon rid ourselves of our eighty-five "blackbirds," who had all behaved very well on the voyage, and were sorry to leave the ship; and that evening I paid a visit to an old friend of mine--an American who kept a large store in Apia, the principal port and town of Samoa. I was telling him all about our cruise, when an old white man, locally known as "Bandy Tom," came up from the yard, and sat down on the verandah steps near us. Old Tom was a character, and well known all over Polynesia as an inveterate old loafer and beachcomber. He was a deserter from the navy, and for over forty years had wandered about the South Pacific, sometimes working honestly for a living, sometimes dishonestly, but usually loafing upon some native community, until they tired of him and made him seek fresh pastures. In his old age he had come to Samoa, and my friend, taking pity on the penniless old wreck, gave him employment as night watchman, and let him hang about the premises and do odd jobs in the day-time. With all his faults he was an amusing ancient, and was known for his "tall" yarns about his experiences with cannibals in Fiji.

Bidding me "good-evening," Bandy Tom puffed away at his pipe, and listened to what I was saying. When I had finished describing our visit to Nisan, and the finding of the ballast, he interrupted.

"I can tell you where them 'pigs' come from, and all about 'em--leastways a good deal; for I knows more about the matter than any one else."

Parker laughed. "Bandy, you know, or pretend to know, about everything that has happened in the South Seas since the time of Captain Cook."

"Ah, you can laugh as much as you like, boss," said the old fellow serenely, "but I know what I'm talkin' about I ain't the old gas-bag you think I am. I lived on Nisan for a year an' ten months, nigh on thirty years ago, gettin' _beche-de-mer_ for Captain Bobby Towns of Sydney." Then turning to me he added: "I ain't got too bad a memory, for all my age. I can tell you the names of all the six islands, and how they lies, an' a good deal about the people an' the queer way they has of catchin' turtle in rope nets; an' I can tell you the names of the head men that was there in my time--which was about 'fifty or 'fifty-one. Just you try me an' see."

I did try him, and he very soon satisfied me that he had lived on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, and knew the place well.
Then he told his story, which I condense as much as possible.

FIRST PART

Bandy was landed at Nisan by Captain Robert Towns of the barque _Adventurer_ of Sydney, to collect _beche-de-mer_. He was well received by the savage inhabitants and provided with a house, and well treated generally, for Captain Towns, knowing the natives to be cannibals and treacherous, had demanded a pledge from them that Bandy should not be harmed, and threatened that if on his return in the following year he found the white man was missing, he would land his crew, and destroy them to the last man. Then the barque sailed. A day or so afterwards Bandy was visited by a native, who was very different in appearance from the Nisan people. He spoke to the white man in good English, and informed him that he was a native of the island of Rotumah, but had been living on Nisan for more than twenty years, had married, had a family, and was well thought of by the people. The two became great friends, and Taula, as the Rotumah man was named, took Bandy into his confidence, and told him of a tragedy that had occurred on Nisan about five or six years after he (Taula) had landed on the islands. He was one of the crew of a whaleship which, on a dark night, nearly ran ashore on Nisan, and in the hurry and confusion of the vessels going about he slipped over the side, swam on shore through the surf, and reached the land safely.

One day, said Taula, the natives were thrown into a state of wild excitement by the appearance of a brigantine, which boldly dropped anchor abreast of the principal village. She was the first vessel that had ever stopped at the islands, and the savage natives instantly planned to capture her and massacre the crew. But they resolved to first put the white men off their guard. Taula, however, did not know this at the time. With a number of the Nisan people he went on board, taking an ample supply of provisions. The brigantine had a large crew and was heavily armed, carrying ten guns, and the natives were allowed to board in numbers. The captain had with him his wife, whom Taula described as being quite a young girl. He questioned the natives about pearl-shell and _beche-de-mer_ and a few hours later, by personal inspection, satisfied himself that the atoll abounded with both. He made a treaty with the apparently friendly people, and at once landed a party to build houses, etc.

I must now, for reasons that will appear later on, hurry over Taula's story as told by him to Bandy.

Eight or ten days after the arrival of the brigantine, the shore party of fourteen white men were treacherously attacked, and thirteen ruthlessly slaughtered. One who escaped was kept as a slave, and the brigantine, to avoid capture, hurriedly put to sea.

Six months or so passed, and the vessel again appeared and anchored, this time on a mission of vengeance. The natives, nevertheless, were not alarmed, and again determined to get possession of the ship, although this time her decks were crowded with men. They attacked her in canoes, were repulsed, returned to the shore and then, with incredible audacity, sent the white sailor whom they had captured on board the vessel to make peace. But not for a moment had they relinquished the determination to capture the vessel, which they decided to effect by treachery, if force could not be used. What followed was related in detail by Taula to Bandy.

Parker and I were deeply interested in Bandy's story, and at its conclusion I asked him if his informant knew the name of the ship and her nationality.

"Not her name, sir; but she was an American. Taula knew the American flag, for the ship he ran away from was a Sag harbour whaler. The pig-iron bars which you found were brought ashore to make a bed for the _beche-de-mer_ curing pots. He showed 'em to me one day."

Both Parker and I were convinced of the truth of Bandy's story, and came to the conclusion that the unknown brigantine was probably a colonial trader, which had afterwards been lost with all hands. For we were both fairly well up in the past history of the South Seas--at least we thought so--and had never heard of this affair at the Sir Charles
Hardy Group. But we were entirely mistaken in our assumptions.

In the month of April in the year 1906, after a lapse of more than five and twenty years, the mystery that enshrouded the tragedy of Nisan was revealed to me by my coming across, in a French town, a small, time-stained and faded volume of 230 pages, and published by J. and J. Harper of New York in 1833, and entitled _Narrative of a Voyage to the Ethiopie and South Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Chinese Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean in the years_ 1829, 1830, 1831, by Abby Jane Morrell, who accompanied her husband, Captain Benjamin Morrell, Junior, of the schooner _Antarctic_.

Now to her story,

SECOND PART

Opening the faded little volume, the reader sees a wood-engraving of the authoress, a remarkably handsome young woman of about twenty years of age, dressed in the quaint fashion of those days. As a matter of fact she was only four and twenty when her book was published. In a brief preface she tells us that her object in writing a book was not for the purpose of exciting interest in her own experiences of a remarkable voyage, but in the hope that it would arouse philanthropic endeavour to ameliorate the condition of American seamen. Throughout the volume there is a vein of deep, yet unobtrusive piety, and the reader is struck with her self-effacement, her courage, her reverent admiration for her young sailor husband, and her pride in his gallant ship and sturdy crew of native-born American seamen. In the _Antarctic_ the young couple sailed many seas, and visited many lands, and everywhere they seem to have been the recipients of unbounded hospitality and attention, especially from their own country people, and English merchants, and naval and military men. It is very evident--even if only judging from her picture--that she was a very charming young lady of the utmost vivacity; and in addition to this, she was an accomplished linguist, and otherwise highly educated. Her beauty, indeed, caused her many tears, owing to the "wicked and persistent attentions" of the American consul at Manila. This gentleman appears to have set himself to work to make Mrs. Morrell a widow, until at last--her husband being away at sea--she had to be guarded from his persistent advances by some of the English and American families resident in Manila. She tells the story in the most naive and delightful manner, and the reader's heart warms to the little woman. But I must not diverge from the subject.

"I am," she says, "the daughter of Captain John Wood, of New York, who died at New Orleans on the 14th of November, 1811. He was then master of the ship _Indian Hunter_.... He died when I was so young that if I pleased myself with thinking that I remember him, I could not have been a judge of his virtues; but it has been a source of happiness to me that he is spoken of by his contemporaries as a man of good sense and great integrity."

When fifteen years of age Miss Wood met her cousin, Captain Morrell, a young man who had gained a reputation for seamanship, and as a navigator. They were mutually attracted to each other, and in a few months were married. Then he sailed away on a two years' voyage, returned, and again set out, this time to the little known South Seas. Absent a year--during which time a son was born to him--he was so pleased with the financial results of the voyage that he determined on a second; and his wife insisted on accompanying him, though he pleaded with her to remain, and told her of the dangers and terrors of a long voyage in unknown seas, the islands of which were peopled by ferocious and treacherous cannibals. But she was not to be deterred from sharing her husband's perils, and with an aching heart took farewell of her infant son, whom she left in care of her mother, and on 2nd September, 1829, the _Antarctic_ sailed from New York. The cruise was to last two years, and the object of it was to seek for new sealing grounds in the Southern Ocean, and then go northward to the Pacific Islands and barter with the natives for sandal-wood, _beche-de-mer_ pearls, and pearl-shell.

The crew of the brigantine were picked men, and all of them gave Morrell a written pledge to abstain from drinking spirits of any kind during the entire voyage. Morrell, though a strict disciplinarian, seems to have had their respect and even affection throughout, and that he was a man of iron resolution and dauntless courage the book gives ample
testimony.

After some months' sealing at the Auckland Islands, and visiting New Zealand, where the Morrells were entertained by the missionary, John Williams, the brigantine made a highly successful cruise among the islands of the South Pacific, and then Morrell went to Manila to dispose of his valuable cargo. This he did to great advantage, and once more his restless, daring spirit impelled him to make another voyage among the islands. This time, however, he left his wife in Manila, where she soon found many friends, who protected her from the annoying attentions of the consul, and nursed her through a severe illness.

"On the seventy-fifth day after the sailing of the _Antarctic?_," she writes, "as I was looking with a glass from my window, as I had done for many days previously, I saw my husband's well-known signal at the mast head of an approaching vessel.... I was no sooner on board than I found myself in my husband's arms; but the scene was too much for my enfeebled frame, and I was for some time insensible. On coming to myself, I looked around and saw my brother, pale and emaciated. My forebodings were dreadful when I perceived that the number of the crew was sadly diminished from what it was when I was last on board. I dared not trust myself to make any inquiries, and all seemed desirous to avoid explanations. I could not rest in this state of mind, and ventured to ask what had become of the men. My husband, with his usual frankness, sat down and detailed to me the whole affair, which was as follows:--

A TALE OF THE OLD TRADING DAYS

"It seems that six weeks after leaving Manila" (here I omit some unimportant details) "he came to six islands that were surrounded by a coral reef." (The Sir Charles Hardy Group.) "Here was a-plenty of _beche-de-mer_ and he made up his mind to get a cargo of this, and what shell he could procure.... On May 21st he sent a boat's crew on shore to clear away the brush and prepare a place to cure the _beche-de-mer_. The natives now came off to the vessel, and seemed quiet, although it was evident that they had never seen a white man before, and the islands bore no trace of ever having been visited by civilised men. The people were a large, savage-looking race, but Mr. Morrell was lulled to security by their civil and harmless (_sic_) appearance, and their fondness of visiting the vessel to exchange their fruits for trinkets and other commodities attractive to the savages in these climes. They were shown in perfect friendship all parts of the vessel, and appeared pleased with the attentions paid them.... A boat was sent on shore with the forge and all the blacksmith's tools, but the savages soon stole the greater part of them.

"This was an unpropitious circumstance, but Mr. Morrell thought that he could easily recover them; and to accomplish this, he took six of his men, well armed, and marched directly to the village where the king lived. This was a lovely place, formed in a grove of trees. Here he met two hundred warriors, all painted for battle, armed with bows and arrows ready for an onset, waving their war plumes, and eager to engage. On turning round he saw nearly as many more in his rear--it was a critical moment--the slightest fear was sure death. Mr. Morrell addressed his comrades, and, in a word, told them that if they did not act in concert, and in the most dauntless manner, death would be inevitable. He then threw down his musket, drew his cutlass, and holding a pistol in his right hand, he pushed for the king, knowing in what reverence savages in general hold the person of their monarch. In an instant the pistol was at the king's breast, and the cutlass waved over his head. The savages had arrowed their bows, and were ready at the slightest signal to have shot a cloud of missiles at the handful of white men; but in an instant, when they saw the danger of their king, they dropped their bows to the ground. At this fortunate moment, the captain marched around the circle, and compelled those who had come with war-clubs to throw those down also; all which he ordered his men to secure and collect into a heap. The king was then conducted with several of his chiefs on board the _Antarctic_, and kept until the next day. They were treated with every attention, but strictly guarded all night On the following morning he gave them a good breakfast, loaded them with presents--for which they seemed grateful, and laboured hard to convince their conqueror that they were friendly to him and his crew--sent them on shore, together with some of his men, to go on with the works which had been commenced; but feeling that a double caution was necessary, he sent a reinforcement to his men on shore, well armed.... All were cautioned to be on their guard; but everything was unavailing; for not long after this, a general attack was made on the men from the woods, in so sudden a manner that they were overthrown at once. Two of the crew who were in the small boat, made their escape out of reach of the arrows, and had the good fortune to pick up
three others who had thrown themselves into the water for safety. On hearing the horrid yells of the savages, the whaleboat was sent with ten men, who, with great exertions, saved two more of the crew. The rest all fell, at one untimely moment, victims to savage barbarity! It was an awful and heart-sickening moment; fourteen of the crew had perished—they were murdered, mangled, and their corpses thrown upon the strand without the possibility of receiving the rites of Christian burial.... Four of the survivors were wounded—the heat was intolerable—the spirits of the crew were broken down, and a sickness came over their hearts that could not be controlled by the power of medicine—a sickness arising from moral causes, that would not yield to science nor art.

"In this situation Captain Morrell made the best of his way for Manila.... I grew pale over the narrative; it filled my dreams for many nights, and occupied my thoughts for many days, almost exclusively.... I dreaded the thought of the mention of the deed, and yet I wished I had been there. I might have done some good, or, if not, I might have assisted to dress the wounded, among whom was my own dear, heroic brother. He received an arrow in the breast, but his good constitution soon got over the shock; though he was pale even when I saw him, so many days after the event. My husband had now lost everything but his courage, his honour, and his perseverance; but the better part of the community of Manila had become his friends, while the American consul was delighted with our misfortunes. He was alone!"

THIRD PART

Nothing daunted by this catastrophe Captain Morrell petitioned the Captain-General of the Philippines for leave to take out a new crew of seventy additional men—sixty-six Manila men, and four Europeans. Everyone warned him of the danger of this—no other ship had ever dared take more than six Manila men as part of her complement, for they were treacherous, and prone to mutiny. But Morrell contested that he would be able to manage them and the captain-general yielded. Two English merchants, Messrs. Cannell and Gellis, generously lent him all the money he required to fit out, taking only his I.O.U. So:

"On the 18th July, 1830, the _Antarctic_ again sailed for Massacre Islands, as my husband had named the group where he lost his men. When I went on board I found a crew of eighty-five men, fifty-five of them savages as fierce as those whom we were about to encounter, and as dangerous, if not properly managed. One would have thought that I should have shrunken from this assemblage as from those of Massacre Islands, but I entered my cabin with a light step; I did not fear savage men half so much as I did a civilised brute. I was with my husband; he was not afraid, why should I be? This was my reasoning, and I found it safe.

"The schooner appeared as formidable as anything possibly could of her size; she had great guns, ten in number, small arms, boarding-pikes, cutlasses, pistols, and a great quantity of ammunition. She was a war-horse in every sense of the word, but that of animal life, and that she seemed partially to have, or one would have thought so, to hear the sailors talk of her.... She coursed over the waters with every preparation for fight.

"On the 13th of September the _Antarctic_ again reached Massacre Islands. I could only view the place as a Golgotha; and shuddered as we neared it; but I could see that most of the old crew who came hither at the time of the massacre were panting for revenge, although their captain had endeavoured to impress upon them the folly of gratifying such a passion if we could gain our purpose by mildness mixed with firmness." (I am afraid that here the skipper of the _Antarctic_ was not exactly open with the little lady. He certainly meant that his crew should "get even" with their shipmates' murderers, but doubtless told her that he "had endeavoured," etc)

"We had no sooner made our appearance in the harbour at Massacre Island, on the 14th, than we were attacked by about three hundred warriors. We opened a brisk fire upon them, and they immediately retreated. This was the first battle I ever saw where men in anger met men in earnest We were now perfectly safe; our Manila men were as brave as Caesar; they were anxious to be landed instantly, to fight these Indians at once. They felt as much superior, no doubt, to these ignorant savages as the philosopher does to the peasant. This the captain would not permit; he knew his
superiority while on board his vessel, and he also knew that this superiority must be, in a manner, lost to him as soon as he landed.

"The firing had ceased, and the enemy had retired, when a single canoe appeared coming from the shore with one man in it. We could not conjecture what this could mean. The man was as naked as a savage and as highly painted, but he managed his paddle with a different hand from the savages. When he came alongside, he cried out to us in English, and we recognised Leonard Shaw, one of our old crew, whom we had supposed among the dead. The meeting had that joyousness about it that cannot be felt in ordinary life; he was dead and buried, and now was alive again! We received him as one might imagine; surprise, joy, wonder, took possession of us all, and we made him recount his adventures, which were wonderful enough.

"Shaw was wounded when the others were slain; he fled to the woods, and succeeded at that time in escaping from death. Hunger at length induced him to leave the woods and attempt to give himself to the savages, but coming in sight of the horrid spectacle of the bodies of his friends and companions roasting for a cannibal feast, he rushed forth again into the woods with the intent rather to starve than to trust to such wretches for protection. For four days and nights he remained in his hiding place, when he was forced to go in pursuit of something to keep himself from starving. After some exertion he obtained three coco-nuts, which were so young that they did not afford much sustenance, but were sufficient to keep him alive fifteen days, during which time he suffered from the continually falling showers, which left him dripping wet. In the shade of his hiding place he had no chance to dry himself, and on the fifteenth day he ventured to stretch himself in the sun; but he did not long remain undisturbed; an Indian saw him, and gave the alarm, and he was at once surrounded by a host of savages. The poor, suffering wretch implored them to be merciful, but he implored in vain; one of them struck him on the back of the head with a war-club, and laid him senseless on the ground, and for a while left him as dead. When he recovered, and had gathered his scattered senses, he observed a chief who was not among those by whom he had been attacked, and made signs to him that he would be his slave if he would save him. The savage intimated to him to follow, which he did, and had his wound most cruelly dressed by the savage, who poured hot water into it, and filled it with sand.

"As soon as the next day, while yet in agony with his wound, he was called up and set to work in making knives, and other implements from the iron hoops, and other plunder from the forge when the massacre took place. This was indeed hard, for the poor fellow was no mechanic, though a first-rate Jack-tar... however, necessity made him a blacksmith, and he got along pretty well.

"The savages were not yet satisfied, and they made him march five or six miles to visit a distinguished chief. This was done in a state of nudity, without anything like sandals or mocassins to protect his feet from the flint stones and sharp shells, and under the burning rays of an intolerable sun. Blood marked his footsteps. The king met him and compelled him to debase himself by the most abject ceremonies of slavery. He was now overcome, and with a dogged indifference was ready to die. He could not, he would not walk back; his feet were lacerated, swollen, and almost in a state of putrefaction. The savages saw this, and took him back by water, but only to experience new torments. The young ones imitated their elders, and these graceless little rascals pulled out his beard and whiskers, and eyebrows and eyelashes. In order to save himself some part of the pain of this wretched process of their amusement, he was permitted to perform a part of this work with his own hands. He was indeed a pitiable object, but one cannot die when one wishes, and be guiltless. This was not all he suffered; he was almost starved to death, for they gave him only the offal of the fish they caught, and this but sparingly; he sustained himself by catching rats, and these offensive creatures were his principal food for a longtime. He understood that the natives did not suffer the rats to be killed, and therefore he had to do it secretly in the night time.

"Thus passed the days of the poor prisoner; the wound on his head was not yet healed, and notwithstanding all his efforts he failed to get the sand out of his first wound until a short time before his deliverance, when it was made known to him that he was to be immolated for a feast to the king of the group! All things had now become matters of indifference to him, and he heard the horrid story with great composure. All the preparations for the sacrifice were got up in his presence, near the very spot where the accursed feast of skulls had been held. All was in readiness, and the people waited a long time for the king; but he did not come, and the ceremony was put off.
“Shaw has often expressed himself on this subject, and said that he could not but feel some regret that his woes were not to be finished, as there was no hope for him, and to linger always in this state of agitation was worse than death; but mortals are short-sighted, for he was destined to be saved through the instrumentality of his friends.

“His soul was again agitated by hope and fear in the extremes when the _Antarctic_ made her appearance a second time on the coast. He feared that her arrival would be the signal for his destruction; but if this should not happen, might he not be saved? The whole population of the island he was on, and those of the others of the group, manned their war canoes for a formidable attack; and the fate of the prisoner was suspended for a season. The attack was commenced by the warriors in the canoes, without doubt confident of success; but the well-directed fire from the _Antarctic_ soon repulsed them, and they sought the shore in paroxysms of rage, which was changed to fear when they found that the big guns of the schooner threw their shot directly into the village, and were rapidly demolishing their dwellings. It was in this state of fear and humility that Shaw was sent off to the vessel to stop the carnage and destruction; they were glad to have peace on any terms. They now gave up their boldness, and as it was the wish of all but the Manila men to spare the effusion of human blood, it was done as soon as safety would permit of it.

“The story of Shaw’s sufferings raised the indignation of every one of the Americans and English we had on board, and they were violently desirous to be led on to attack the whole of the Massacre Islands, and extirpate the race at once. They felt at this moment as if it would be an easy thing to kill the whole of the inhabitants; but Captain Morrell was not to be governed by any impulse of passion—he had other duties to perform; yet he did not reprimand the men for this feeling; thinking it might be of service to him hereafter.

“After taking every precaution to ensure safety, by getting up his boarding-nettings many feet above the deck, and everything prepared for defence or attack, the frame of the house, brought for the purpose, was got up on a small uninhabited island—which had previously been purchased of the king in exchange for useful articles such as axes, shaves, and other mechanical tools, precisely such as the Indians wished for. The captain landed with a large force, and began to fell the trees to make a castle for defence. Finding two large trees, nearly six feet through, he prepared the limbs about forty feet from the ground, and raised a platform extending from one to the other, with an arrow-proof bulwark around it. Upon this platform were stationed a garrison of twenty men, with four brass swivels. The platform was covered with a watertight roof, and the men slept there at night upon their arms, to keep the natives from approaching to injure the trees or the fort by fire—the only way they could assail the garrison. It looked indeed like a castle—formidable in every respect; and the ascent to it was by a ladder, which was drawn up at night into this war-like habitation. The next step was to clear the woods from around the castle, in order to prevent a lurking enemy from coming within arrow-shot of the fort. Next, the house was raised, and made quite a fine appearance, being one hundred and fifty feet long, forty feet broad, and very high. The castle protected the house and the workmen in it, and both house and castle were so near the sea-board that the _Antarctic_ while riding at anchor, protected both. The castle was well stocked with provisions in case of a siege.

“The next day, after all was in order for business, a large number of canoes made their appearance near Massacre Island. Shaw said that this fleet belonged to another island (of the group) and he had never known them to stop there before. My husband, having some suspicions, did not suffer the crew to go on shore next morning at the usual time; and about eight o'clock one of the chiefs came off, as usual, to offer us fruits, but no boat was sent to meet him. He waited some time for us, and then directed his course to our island, which my husband had named Wallace Island, in memory of the officer who had bravely fallen in fight on the day of the massacre. This was surprising as not a single native had set foot on that island since our works were begun; but we were not kept long in suspense, for we saw about a hundred war-canoes start from the back side of Massacre Island, and make towards Wallace Island. We knew that war was their object, and the _Antarctic_ was prepared for battle. The chief who had come to sell us fruit, came in front of the castle—the first man. He gave the war-whoop, and about two hundred warriors, who had concealed themselves in the woods during the darkness of the night, rushed forward. The castle was attacked on both sides, and the Indians discharged their arrows at the building in the air, till they were stuck, like porcupines' quills, in every part of the roof. The garrison was firm, and waked in silence until the assailants were within a short distance, when they opened a tremendous fire with their swivels, loaded with canister shot; the men were ready with their muskets also, and the _Antarctic_ opened her fire of large guns, all with a direct and deadly aim at the leaders of the savage band. The execution was very great,
and in a short time the enemy beat a precipitate retreat, taking with them their wounded, and as many of their dead as they could. The ground was strewed with implements of war, which the savages had thrown away in their flight, or which had belonged to the slain. The enemy did not expect such a reception, and they were prodigiously frightened; the sound of the cannon alarmed every woman and child in the group, as it echoed through the forest, or died upon the wave; they had never heard such a roar before, for in our first fight there was no necessity for such energy. The Indians took to the water, leaving only a few in their canoes to get them off, while the garrison hoisted the American flag, and were greeted by cheers from those on board the schooner, who were in high spirits at their victory, which was achieved without the loss of a man on our part, and only two wounded. The music struck up 'Yankee Doodle,' 'Rule Britannia,' etc., and the crew could hardly restrain their joy to think that they had beaten their enemy so easily.

"The boats were all manned, and most of the crew went on shore to mark the devastation which had been made. I saw all this without any sensation of fear, so easy is it for a woman to catch the spirit of those near her. If I had a few months before this time read of such a battle I should have trembled at the detail of the incidents; but seeing all the animation and courage which were displayed, and noticing at the same time how coolly all was done, every particle of fear left me, and I stood quite as collected as any heroine of former days. Still I could not but deplore the sacrifice of the poor, misguided, ignorant creatures, who wore the human form, and had souls to save. Must the ignorant always be taught civilisation through blood?--situated as we were, no other course could be taken.

"On the morning of the 19th, to our great surprise, the chief who had previously come out to bring us fruit, and had done so on the morning of our great battle, came again in his canoe, and called for Shaw, on the edge of the reef, with his usual air of kindness and friendship, offering fruit, and intimating a desire for trade, as though nothing had happened. The offer seemed fair, but all believed him to be treacherous. The small boat was sent to meet him, but Shaw, who we feared was now an object of vengeance, was not sent in her. She was armed for fear of the worst, and the coxswain had orders to kill the chief if he should discover any treachery in him. As our boat came alongside the canoe, the crew saw a bearded arrow attached to a bow, ready for the purpose of revenge. Just as the savage was about to bend his bow, the coxswain levelled his piece, and shot the traitor through the body; his wound was mortal, but he did not expire immediately. At this instant a fleet of canoes made their appearance to protect their chief. The small boat lost one of her oars in the fight, and we were obliged to man two large boats and send them to the place of contest. The large boats were armed with swivels and muskets, and a furious engagement ensued. The natives were driven from the water, but succeeded in taking off their wounded chief, who expired as he reached the shore.

"After the death of Hennean, the name of the chief we had slain, the inhabitants of Massacre Island fled to some other place, and left all things as they were before our attack upon them, and our men roamed over it at will. The skulls of several of our slaughtered men were found at Hennean's door, trophies of his bloody prowess. These were now buried with the honours of war; the colours of the _Antarctic_ were lowered half-mast, minute guns were fired, and dirges were played by our band, in honour of those who had fallen untimely on Massacre Island. This was all that feeling or affection could bestow. Those so inhumanly murdered had at last the rites of burial performed for them; millions have perished without such honours...it is the last sad office that can be paid.

"We now commenced collecting and curing _beche-de-mer_ and should have succeeded to our wishes, if we had not been continually harassed by the natives as soon as we began our efforts. We continued to work in this way until the 28th of October, when we found that the natives were still hostile, and on that day one of our men was attacked on Massacre Island, but escaped death through great presence of mind, and shot the man, who was the brother of the chief Hennean. Our man's name was Thomas Holmes, a cool, deliberate Englishman. Such an instance of self-possession, in such great danger as that in which he was placed, would have given immortality to a greater man. We felt ourselves much harassed and vexed by the persevering savages, and finding it impossible to make them understand our motives and intentions, we came to the conclusion to leave the place forthwith. This was painful, after such struggles and sacrifices and misfortunes; but there was no other course to pursue. Accordingly, on the 3rd of November, 1830, we set fire to our house and castle, and departed by the light of them, taking the _beche-de-mer_ we had collected and cured."

So ends Mrs. Morrell's story of the tragedy of "Massacre Island". She has much else to relate of the subsequent cruise of the _Antarctic_ in the South Pacific and the East Indies, and finally the happy conclusion of an adventurous voyage,
when the vessel returned safely to New York.

If the reader has been sufficiently interested in her story to desire to know where in the South Pacific her "Massacre Island" is situated, he will find it in any modern map or atlas, almost midway between New Ireland and Bougainville Island, the largest of the Solomon group, and in lat. 4 deg. 50' S., long. 154 deg. 20' E. In conclusion, I may mention that further relics of the visit of the _Antarctic_ came to light about fifteen years ago, when some of the natives brought three or four round shot to the local trader then living on Nisan. They had found them buried under some coral stone _debris_ when searching for robber crabs.

(The end)
Louis Becke's short story: Nisan Island; A Tale Of The Old Trading Days

By Louis Becke