

this the priests well knew; nor can any but zealots who think that those whom they style heretics are worse than infidels excuse their intrusion upon missionary ground already fully and successfully occupied. On the other hand, their precipitate expulsion, under circumstances of great hardship, exhibited an unchristian spirit, for which the resident missionaries may justly be held responsible, as they unquestionably had it in their power to prevent any positive ill treatment on the part of the natives.

The consequences of this expulsion of the priests remain to be related. In due course of time the French frigate *Venus*, commanded by M. Du Petit Thouars, arrived at the island, and anchored in the harbour of Papieti. The commander immediately demanded satisfaction for the outrage committed on his countrymen the priests, and threatened that unless two thousand dollars were paid him within twenty-four hours, he would fire upon and burn the town of Papieti. The queen had no money, and was inclined, as I was told, to let the French do their worst; but as in this case the loss would have fallen wholly on the foreign residents, the required sum was collected from them by Mr. Pritchard, and paid to M. Du Petit Thouars. A treaty was also forced upon the government, allowing all Frenchmen to visit the island freely, to erect churches, and to practise their religion. Thus the local laws were abrogated under the threats of an irresistible force, and the national independence virtually surrendered.

This was a high-handed measure on the part of the French commander, and one that hardly admits of justification, particularly the demand for money; for he had himself been received with great hospitality, and not long before another of his sovereign's frigates, the *Artemise*, I think, had been saved from wreck by the unrecompensed exertions of the Tahitians. The amount demanded also was at least four times as great as the pecuniary damage incurred by the priests would be reasonably valued at. The French commander, therefore, appears, in thus bullying a defenceless people into the payment of an exorbitant indemnity and into a relinquishment of the right of admitting or excluding foreigners and strange religious creeds, by municipal regulation, in a light far from advantageous.

We have seen that Paofai and his party at first countenanced the French priests. This they no doubt did in the hope of introducing an influence which might be opposed to that of the English missionaries. Subsequently to these transactions, and after an attempt