

practise upon their alarms, and to threaten them with foreign interference.

Much complaint has been made of the influence which the missionaries, and Mr. Pritchard in particular, exercise over the government of Tahiti. They have, unquestionably, great influence; but I am satisfied that they are justly entitled to it. Indeed I cannot but consider it as part of their duty, nay, the great object of their mission, to acquire and exercise a salutary control over their converts, both of high and low degree. My own observations satisfied me that this control is exerted solely for the purpose of fulfilling the laudable object for which they were sent. It is possible that their views of the proper method of instructing an ignorant people are not at all times, or in every respect, the most enlightened; but no one can with propriety question their pious zeal, or the honesty of their intentions. We may perhaps lament their intolerance towards other sects, but no one can visit the island without perceiving on every side the most positive evidence of the great benefits they have already bestowed, and are daily conferring upon the inhabitants.

All this good has been done in the face of many and great difficulties. The most serious of these is the evil influence of a large portion of the other foreign residents. Although among these are some who are truly respectable, the majority is made up of runaways from the English convict settlements, and deserters from vessels. These men, the outcasts and refuse of every maritime nation, are addicted to every description of vice, and would be a pest even in a civilized community. It may easily be conceived what an injurious influence such a band of vagabonds, without trade or occupation by which they can support themselves, guilty of every species of profanity and crime, must exert upon the morals of the natives, and what a barrier they must oppose to their improvement in morals and religion.

Tahiti, when first visited, was proverbial for its licentiousness, and it would be asking too much, to require that after so short an enjoyment of the means of instruction, and in the face of such obstacles, its inhabitants should as a body have become patterns of good morals. Licentiousness does still exist among them, but the foreign residents and visitors are in a great degree the cause of its continuance, and an unbridled intercourse with them serves to perpetuate it. Severe laws have been enacted, but they cannot be put in force in cases where one of the parties is a foreigner. I see no reason, however, why this island should be pointed out as conspicuous for licentiousness. When compared with many parts of the world that arrogate a superior civilization, it appears almost in an advantageous light. Vice, at any