

than once been spoken of, holds the office of chief judge, and is considered as the best statesman on the island. Hitoti is distinguished for a dignity, uprightness, and good sense, which command universal respect. Taua possesses a high reputation as a brave and skilful warrior.

Of these three leaders, Hitoti alone is wholly free from reproach. Paofai is accused of covetousness, and a propensity to intrigue; and Taua, of a fondness for intoxicating drinks.

The queen, however, contrives to rule in all matters that rightfully belong to her; and, by the aid of the missionaries, maintains her ground against this strong opposition, although its leaders have generally the power to determine the course of policy to be pursued, and entire authority over the execution of the laws. They are much opposed to foreigners, and have made several attempts to have them banished from the island. They are supposed to entertain the design of setting aside the queen, on account of her irregular behaviour and vices; but this plan is not likely to succeed, because of the personal popularity she enjoys, and the number of adherents she possesses among the people. In conformity with such a design, these chiefs are said to be continually watching for opportunities to increase their own power and diminish the royal authority. Among the occasions of which they endeavoured to avail themselves, was the celebrated affair of the Roman Catholic priests, the circumstances of which, as nearly as I could learn from the statements of both parties, are as follows:

Two priests of this denomination, who had been stationed at the Manga Reva, or Gambier Group, landed on the southern side of the island, and travelled towards Papieti, preaching the doctrines of their church. They, however, found none willing to listen, and it is said, that no native would receive them into his house. On their arrival at Papieti, however, Paofai, Hitoti, and some other chiefs, gave them countenance, and they were hospitably received by Mr. Morenhout, the acting American consul, who, however, did not lodge them under his own roof, but in an adjacent building. The people, however, excited by the preaching of the English missionaries, broke into the building, and compelled the priests to embark on board a small vessel, which carried them to Uea, or Wallis Island, about two thousand miles to the west of Tahiti.

In considering this question calmly, and stripping it of the exaggerations with which both parties have loaded it, it is difficult to say which was most in the wrong. The Protestant religion was established by law upon the island, to the exclusion of all others, and 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