

The first attempt to introduce Christianity is related to have occurred in the following manner. Some years before the arrival of the missionaries, a vessel was wrecked upon the island of Upolu, and her cargo seized upon by the natives, many of whom, even to the present day, regret that they did not then understand what riches were thus placed at their disposal. Their mode of treating the prize was farcical in the extreme: pipes were made out of candlesticks, clothing was thrown away as valueless, and many injured themselves with the fire-arms. The crew were well treated, and fed for a long time, although the natives were greatly astonished at the quantities of pigs required for their support, and entertained fears lest they should breed a famine in the land. The captain advised his crew to turn missionaries, and set them the example himself. He met with much success, and succeeded in building several churches, until, upon the arrival of the English missionaries, he was compelled to relinquish his assumed occupation. It is not probable that even the captain was deeply versed in religious knowledge, and very certain that the crew could not have been; but their success appears to have arisen from the great veneration with which white men were at first regarded by the Samoans. They looked upon them as a sort of spirit, whom it was impossible to hurt or to kill; and the ships first seen off the coast were considered as heavenly messengers, prognosticating some dreadful calamity. The bad conduct of their nautical visitors has destroyed this reverence, and foreigners generally no longer meet the kind welcome they formerly received; this observation does not apply to the missionaries, who receive all the honour that is due to their good intention, of which the natives are fully aware.

The Wesleyan missionaries, and those of the British Board, reached these islands about the same time, or the former were perhaps the first to arrive. The influence of the Wesleyan tenets, and the number of their followers, increased rapidly under the superintendence of the Rev. Mr. Turner. Difficulties, however, arose between the two parties of missionaries, which were finally adjusted between the two boards in London, and the Wesleyans abandoned this field for that of the Feejee Group. This arrangement was amicably made, and I heard of only one individual on either side, who showed an uncharitable spirit towards his fellow-labourers of the other party. In spite of the removal of the Wesleyans, there is still a large number of the natives who adhere to the tenets and forms taught them by Mr. Turner, and still retain a strong attachment to him.

The missionaries were from the very first taken under the protection of the most powerful chiefs, and have never received either insult or