

CHAPTER V.

SOMU-SOMU.

1840.

IMMEDIATELY after despatching Paddy Connel on his errand to Captain Hudson, Whippy came to me. He had heard, on board the ship, some intimation of the purport of the message sent to Rewa by Connel, and he advised me to be on my guard for the first movement after Vendovi's capture. He thought that an endeavour would be made by the people of Ambau to surprise the observatory, and to take me prisoner, (for the purpose of ransoming Vendovi,) for they are closely allied to those of Rewa. As our distance from Ambau was no more than a few hours' travel, it would be easy for Tanoa, or his son Seru, to fall upon us with a thousand men, before we could have any notice whatever of their approach. After hearing all he had to say upon the subject, I sent him for Tui Levuka, who came to my tent. His amazement was great when he was told what was in progress, and he seemed to be almost beside himself for a few moments. When he was sufficiently recovered, I told him that I put implicit confidence in him; that if he suffered me to be surprised by any force, on him and his people would rest the responsibility, and that I looked to him to give me the earliest notice of any attempt to attack me. This he accordingly promised, and, at the same time, he told Whippy, the most probable persons from whom any attack would come would be the mountaineers, who were all now under the influence of Ambau, and would be easily induced to attack us. A thousand of them, according to his opinion, might be upon us in a few hours; but we had little to fear before dawn of day, for that was the only time at which they made an attack, choosing the time of the second or soundest sleep. He