

## CHAPTER IX.

## MALOLO.

1840.

THE melancholy event of which I became aware in its full extent by the return of the boats under Lieutenant Alden, as related at the close of the foregoing chapter, was calculated to excite the most intense feelings that can agitate the mind of a man or of an officer. It took place just as,—after weeks of intense anxiety for the safety of those under my command, exposed in open boats to the perils of the sea, and in small detachments to the insidious attacks of savages, instigated not merely by cupidity, but by the horrible instinct of cannibal appetite,—I had myself closed the operations of the survey, and awaited only my junction with the boats to be satisfied that all our perils were at an end. One of the victims was my own near relation, confided to my care by a widowed mother; I had therefore more than the ordinary degree of sorrow, which the loss of promising and efficient officers must cause in the breast of every commander, to oppress me. The blood of the slain imperatively called for retribution, and the honour of our flag demanded that the outrage upon it should not remain unpunished. On the other hand, it was necessary, in order that any proceedings I should adopt should be such as would be capable of full vindication and meet the approval of the whole civilized world, that my action in the case should not appear to be instigated by mere vindictiveness, and should be calculated to serve, not as an incitement to retaliation upon future visitors, but as a salutary lesson, as well to the actual perpetrators of the deed, as to the inhabitants of the whole group.

It was beyond every thing else important, that in the desire of inflicting punishment, I should avoid, as far as possible, the risk of