

Although the hopes of the French consul to see the island taken possession of by his countrymen were frustrated, he took advantage of the state of affairs to secure a personal advantage to himself, by procuring a commercial treaty which should abrogate, in favour of the French, the laws against the importation of spirituous liquors. Captain Laplace lent himself to this design, and a commercial treaty was drawn up, which, under the avowed intention of protecting French commerce, provided for the free admission of brandy and wine, in which the consul had hitherto been an illicit trader. This treaty was presented to the king, who had by this time arrived, late in the afternoon, and he was required to put his signature to it by the next morning, failing which, it was intimated that hostile measures would be again resorted to. It is not surprising that the king, on this occasion, found himself, as he expressed it to me, completely at a loss what to do, when he found a second treaty presented to him for his signature, which broke down his laws and the municipal regulations of the island. These difficulties were enhanced by finding that he was left entirely to himself, and without the aid of any friendly advice; for no time was allowed him, even to call in the counsel of his own chiefs. The foreigners, both residents and missionaries, kept aloof from him, although now was a juncture at which the true friends of this people might have acted to advantage by stepping forward in support of the laws under which they lived. They cannot be too much blamed for having suffered this flagrant outrage upon the rights of a feeble nation to be committed with their knowledge, and without strong and decided remonstrances on their part. The missionaries, in particular, lost a glorious opportunity. It would have shown their character in a beautiful light, if, after abstaining as they did from any act that might have increased the embarrassment of the government, when they were themselves threatened, they had come forward to oppose, by every means in their power, the overthrow of the laws enacted to check the scourge of intemperance, against which they had so long contended.

The merchants, also, had not the spirit to raise a voice in condemnation of an act fraught with so much evil to the people from whom they were gaining their livelihood. Although all were aware of what was going forward, and some of them were appealed to, none would take the responsibility of advising the king to withhold his signature from a treaty that was to degrade him in his own eyes, and which subverted the laws that had hitherto been so beneficial.

I make these comments on the conduct of the foreign residents and missionaries, because I am satisfied that the smallest opposition would now have checked the career of Captain Laplace; and it would have