

outrages committed on Tanna, Erromanga, and Fate, requesting the Commodore to take such steps as he might think best calculated to prevent the repetition of such deeds, and render life and property more safe in time to come. Our brethren had suffered, not only to the spoiling of their goods, but to the loss of their lives, and in our circumstances, we thought it but just to them, to the mission, and to the interests of humanity, to follow up the steps taken in Sydney, and lay a statement of the leading facts before the representative of the British government, for his information and guidance. The Commodore evinced a most friendly spirit; but said he could do nothing without interpreters; he could do nothing without first letting the natives understand distinctly what his object and intentions were. He said also, that he would like the *Dayspring* to accompany him, that he might have the benefit of Captain Fraser's experience, when necessary, to act as pilot. With these apparently reasonable requests we felt it our duty to comply. Mr. Paton was appointed to interpret at Tanna, Mr. Gordon at Erromanga, and Mr. Morrison at Fate. The meeting also appointed me to accompany the party in the *Dayspring*, to give any assistance that I could.

I come now to state the most important facts of all, namely, what was done. At each of the islands the Commodore got on board, or met on shore, the principal chiefs near the harbour, and through the interpreters explained to them the object of his visit, that it was to enquire into the complaints which British subjects had against them, and to hear if they had any complaints against British subjects. The Queen had not sent him, he said, to compel them to become christians, or to punish them because they had not become christians; she left them to do as they liked in the matter, but she was very angry with them on another account; they had encouraged her subjects to come and live among them, had sold them land, and promised to protect them; yet afterwards they had murdered them, or attempted to murder them, and had stolen or destroyed their property; that the inhabitants of those islands are now talked about over the whole world, for treachery, cruelty, and murder; that the Queen would no longer allow them to murder or injure those of her subjects who were living peaceably among them, either as missionaries or traders; that she would send a ship of war here every year to enquire into their conduct, and to see that her subjects were not molested, while living peaceably among the natives; and that if any white man injured any native, they were to tell the captain of the man-of-war, and the white man would be punished as fast as the black, it was the Queen's word,

that her subjects should do ill to nobody, and that nobody should do ill to them.

At Port Resolution the chief ringleaders in the more recent outrages, were summoned to answer for the charges preferred against them, with certification that, if they did not appear by next day at noon, their villages would be shelled. In the article referred to in the *Record*, Mr. Geddie's wisdom and humanity, in negotiating for the *Tylorus*, are held up in striking contrast to our reckless folly in connexion with the *Caracoa*. Now, without my being aware of how Mr. Geddie had acted on that occasion, it so happened that Mr. Paton and I gave the same, or equally strong, assurances to those summoned that Mr. Geddie had given, but greater guilt had produced greater fear, and they preferred to fight the big ship. Indeed the unfriendly natives were quite in ecstasies of joy about fighting, they boasted of having plenty of guns, powder, and shot, and that it was very good for them to fight. They seemed to think that a party of men would be sent on shore to attack them in their own villages, and that as the fighting would be in the bush, they would soon have the best of it. It was not till every pacific measure failed, and till every precaution was taken to prevent injury to life; not after a warning of two hours only, as the *Record* asserts, but after a warning of nearly two days,—that the Commodore shelled two villages, both of which had been centres of mischief for many a long year, and in both of which gaily parties were living and being protected.—The object was to spare life, but destroy property, and make such a display of power, as should dispel the illusion under which the Tannese, particularly at Port Resolution, had been living for a long time past, that act as they might, especially towards missionaries, and those belonging to them, they would not be called to account.

The loss of life, whatever it may have been, was accidental. By the bursting of a shell, some days afterwards, three natives were killed, and four wounded. The loss of the seaman's life was also accidental.—The party sent ashore were to destroy property, not to attack the natives, and were to confine themselves to one of the villages or districts that had been shelled, and where it was all but certain no natives could be found. But unfortunately they had no native guides; before the firing began, the friendly natives were afraid of acting as guides, lest they should become marked men afterwards, although when the firing was over, and they saw the power of a man of war, any number could have been got.—When the party got into the bush, they took a wrong path which led them beyond the district that had been shelled; there they fell in with a chief and a party of na-