

George III.; and two he purchased of the Americans, paying for them with provisions and sandal-wood. With them he commenced merchant, trading chiefly with China, his great staple being sandal-wood, which is plentifully produced in the Sandwich Islands; and thus a spirit of enterprize, which for a time at least operated greatly to the advantage of the natives, was generated. Those recent accounts to which we shall presently allude do not present so flattering a picture.

Tamchama, although he did not disguise the contempt he felt for the barbarous system of religion then existing, did not think fit to exert his authority to abrogate it, but, on the contrary, thought it his interest to strengthen his power by himself assuming the chief sacerdotal dignity. But in the year 1819, the American Board of Missions sent forth a company of Missionaries from Boston, carrying with them four natives, one of whom was son to the tributary king of Towee, and had been sent to America for his education. Before their arrival an event had occurred most favourable for the objects they had at heart. Tamchama, and his son Rihoriho, had, with the consent of his mother and many of the most influential chiefs, formally abolished idolatry, and destroyed the altars and maracs. The Missionaries met with a warm welcome, and immediately found themselves invested with considerable power; for here, as at the Society Islands, they became the advisers of the king in matters temporal as well as spiritual. The line of conduct they have pursued in interfering too far in secular affairs has been censured by several voyagers, but it is beside our purpose to enter into a discussion of it here.

Christianity was, however, destined to be established at Owhyhee, as at Otaheite, on a bloody foundation: the adherents of the old faith, rebelling against the sovereign and the restrictions of the new laws founded on religious observances to which they could not conform, took up arms: a decisive battle, which lasted from morning till sunset, terminated in favour of Rihoriho.

On the death of Rihoriho, his brother Kiaukianli, or Tamchama III., was raised to the sovereignty, in which he still continues.

The authority of the Missionaries appears to have been much weakened, principally from two causes, the over and somewhat puritanical strictness with which they endeavoured to enforce their rule, interfering with the innocent amusements of the natives—and, as at Otaheite, interfering with even the sports of the children,—and the evil example set by the crews of foreign vessels. Very recently, an attempt made by some French Roman Catholic priests to establish themselves has led to some extraordinary proceedings. These priests went out a few years ago, upon, as they assert, the invitation of Boki, the confidential minister of Rihoriho, and his son, who visited Paris in 1824. They were very successful among the people; but, as it is asserted, they encouraged the people to break the laws against the use of spirituous liquors, and countenanced the re-establishment of grog-shops; they were upon this pretence seized by orders of the king, and transported to California, where they were turned adrift, and found refuge with the Jesuit Missionaries established there. The French Government has claimed and enforced pecuniary satisfaction for this outrage, and a violent controversy has been raised upon the subject between the Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Church, the former justifying the act, although they at the same time disclaim having advised it.

Their latest accounts of the condition of the natives are very unfavourable. "The whole nation," says one of them, Mr. Armstrong, "not even excepting the chiefs, are poor. The common people are distressingly so. There is not one man, woman, or child in ten,