

We knew that it would tend to separation between our missionaries and others in the South Seas, as it has done. We could not doubt that though it might impress the natives with an idea of British power, it would destroy in them all confidence in the pacific character of missionaries, which is the first essential to success in missions among savages—that it would lead them to identify the missionaries with other foreigners, and exasperate them more against both them and the religion of Jesus, *as the missionaries have since felt.*

But we never supposed that whatever steps the missionaries had taken they had committed any thing more than an error in judgment, nor did we suppose for a moment that they were actuated by any thing but the best of motives. If any different impression was produced by our article, we are sorry for it. We never declared them "unfit for the common brotherhood of missions," nor used language approaching to it. We thought that they had made a mistake in allowing themselves in any way to be mixed up with the affair. But we never meant to hint that for one error of judgment, and that with most of them at the beginning of their career, they should be cast off or regarded as unfit for their position. And we have no hesitation in saying, that for any word in that article that is or seems to be harsh or offensive to the missionaries personally, we express our sincere regret.

Since that time the subject has undergone a good deal of discussion, particularly in the Australian colonies. We have given our careful attention to all that has come under our notice on both sides of the question, and we must say, that while on some important points, the information first given by the actors in the affair has been modified by later information, yet the main facts are as they were then represented. In some respects increased information has only set the matter in a worse light, and on the whole the more it is examined, the more unjustifiable does it appear. So much is this the case, that one of the missionaries, who had allowed himself to be drawn into it, has since written home, candidly con-

fessing that his views have been "modified," and lamenting the manner in which he was led to having any concern in the matter.

Immediately after the *Curacoa* affair, an officer on board published an account of it in a Sydney paper, in which the following statement appears: "We had one seaman wounded, who was shot through the abdomen. He was taken on board and died shortly after. The exact number of killed and wounded among the Tannese we were not able to ascertain, *but we believe it must exceed twenty.* The day after our departure, a party of natives coming accidentally upon an unexploded shell in the bush were seized with a curiosity to see the contents of the brass percussion fuze, they squatted themselves round the shell and began beating the fuze with a stone, when it suddenly exploded, killing six of them and wounding others."

We had no reason at the time to suspect the correctness of this information. It was furnished by one engaged in the affair. A party from the ship had landed, and had the best opportunity of knowing the results of their proceedings. We confess that though we withheld this from publication, it did rouse our feelings and perhaps lent some pungency to our remarks. It was certainly most unfortunate, for the character of the missionaries, that such an account should have been published by those likely to be best informed, and no correction appeared till the indignation of the christian public in Australia had been excited. Every friend of the mission will rejoice to learn by the accounts which we have published since, and those which we published in the *Extra*, that the loss of life, though still to be deplored, was not such as was at first represented.

In the letters of the missionaries no mention was made of any efforts to secure the interference of a man-of-war previous to the arrival of Commodore Wiseman. It was there stated that on the arrival of the latter the missionaries had drawn up a memorial to Commodore Wiseman, calling attention to the outrages committed on British subjects in the mission service, &c., and the impression produced was that it was upon