

41. For some months previous to January, 1887, four escaped convicts appear to have been at large in the jungle at Mua. Various attempts appear to have been made to capture these men, which failed, owing, as is alleged, to the sympathy felt for them by the inhabitants of Mua. A petty chief, named Tobui, who had in 1884 returned there from banishment at Haapai, a banishment inflicted on him for having originated the petition for annexation to England alluded to in paragraph 20 of this despatch, was especially obnoxious to the Government, which believed him to be the ringleader of the anti-Government party at Mua. There can be little doubt that this man, with others, was in constant communication with these outlaws, and I think that such evidence as was forthcoming at the Court of Inquiry justified the belief that he instigated the attack on Mr. Baker which was made by the four convicts.

42. This attack took place on the evening of Thursday, the 13th January, 1887. Mr. Baker was not touched, but his son and daughter were grievously wounded.

43. The action of the King was prompt and decisive. Efforts appear to have been at once made to capture the convicts, the last of whom appears to have surrendered on the Monday following the attack, and Tobui with many others was arrested for complicity in the attempted assassination. A message appears to have reached the King from Tugi on the Saturday, which he appears to have construed as meaning the breaking-out of civil war; although, in reality, the only faction in arms against the Government appears to have been that of these four wretched convicts, who, for a short time, chose to assume a defiant attitude. Tobui, whom the Government regarded as their leader, had been arrested at Mua that morning, and was actually seen by the messenger from Tugi to the King, as he left the Palace, in Nukualofa, where Tobui had just arrived a prisoner from Mua. All the men from Western Tongatabu were ordered to rendezvous at Mua, and they came with faces blackened and all the paraphernalia of Tongan war.

44. Whether the King believed in the existence of a widespread conspiracy against him or not I cannot say. I am inclined to think he did not. He, at any rate, acted as though he did, and by the advice of Mr. Baker, and contrary, as it appeared, to his own judgment at the time, he sent for the men from Haapai and Vavau to come armed to him with all speed. Mr. Baker was perhaps, from the natural agitation following the narrow escape he had had of his life, not the best adviser the King could, at this moment, have had; and Mr. Baker admits that, viewed in the light of subsequent events, the advice to send for these men was unwise.

45. My own opinion is that had a political conspiracy existed—and I am far from denying that one did—the King could easily have crushed it with the force he could have brought to bear from other parts of Tongatabu, and should never have exposed that island to the almost certain excesses of their old enemies at Haapai.

46. The convicts having surrendered, and the other arrests having been made, such tranquillity as existed previous to the attempted assassination appears to have returned.

47. With the arrival of the Haapai men, which commenced on Tuesday, the 18th January, begins the third of the divisions of my inquiry.

48. I could not discover the exact terms of the message sent by the King to command these men's attendance; but there is no doubt that they considered themselves from the first as at war with the Wesleyans of Tongatabu. The King and Mr. Baker addressed them, begging them to observe order and to act under command, but in vain. They plundered the Wesleyans right and left, and distributed themselves in bands over the whole island for the double purpose of obtaining plunder and of converting the Wesleyans. Besides Nukualofa, the Towns of Fuamotu, Kologa, Niutoua, Nukunuku, Matahau, Houma, Patai, and Maufaga were subject to one or more visits from these marauders; and, although the plunder was confined to pigs, native cloth, and objects of no great value in themselves, still it was all these poor people possessed; and when, as in some cases it did, brutal ill-treatment accompanied robbery, the patience with which the Wesleyans endured their troubles astonishes me, and I can only attribute it to the good influence and pacific counsels of Mr. Moulton.

49. I do not think it was proved that the attacks of these so-called warriors were confined to the property of Wesleyans—I am inclined to believe that others than Wesleyans were plundered; but there can be no doubt that the Wesleyans were, out of all proportion, the greatest sufferers.

50. About this time the chiefs also appear to have considered the opportunity of viewing the attack on Mr. Baker as the result of a Wesleyan conspiracy as too good to be lost. Constant *fonos* were held, at which the people were beaten and otherwise ill-treated, and in the end their fortitude generally appears to have given way, and they nearly all went over to the Free Church.

51. The King and Mr. Baker appear to have acted half-heartedly in suppressing these disturbances. Tugi and Ata in fact deposed that they had received from Mr. Baker in the early part of 1885 orders to "act strongly," and they appear to have considered that these orders were still in force. The latter, in relation to the later beatings of his people, stated that he knew they would be beaten at Nukualofa, and he therefore thought they had better be beaten by him (implying that they would thus be mercifully treated), and that it must be the Government's will to beat them, for the Government could stop it in a moment if they chose to. The former excused himself for not stopping the thrashing of people in his presence by saying it was being done by one over whom he had no authority, and who he supposed was acting on higher instructions. This latter evidence is noteworthy, as Tugi is the highest chief in Tonga, and the person who was beating the prisoners was an adopted son of the King, who claimed in his evidence that he had an inherited right to thrash people.

52. I have no doubt, from the evidence of Tuuhetoka, the Minister of Police, that, had the Government placed at his disposal a sufficient force for the purpose, order might have been restored at any moment; or, if the King had simply indicated to the high chiefs that these riots must stop, stopped they would have been at once. But there was undoubtedly a feeling in the minds of all concerned that any action that should end in the extinction of the "Fakaogo" (Wesleyan) Church would not be unacceptable to the King or to Mr. Baker.