

The indirect causes of this outrage were complicated, but of assisted and persistent growth. From the early days of foreign interests and immigration in Hawaii the American element had predominated. The contention of the two principal European nations sending ships into the North Pacific—England and France—for supremacy in the islands was hampered by this fact. The remedy adopted by the French was the introduction of a rival religion. It was the belief of the British consul that American influence might thus be broken, and the field left clear for a settlement of the question of ultimate sovereignty between the two powers, whose policy in that part of the world was one of conquest or colonization. The native sentiment turned toward that people by whom their independence had been first virtually acknowledged. The treaty negotiated by Capt. Jones had been the first actual recognition of their autonomy. For while that treaty had not been formally ratified, it had been observed as morally binding. The United States had manifested towards the Hawaiians a spirit of goodwill, and had maintained an attitude of neighborly respect in all official relations. The visits of their naval vessels had been generally helpful and encouraging; the purposes of their immigrants had been generally civilizing and progressive. By the policy of the French and English the Americans were thrust into a position of defense alongside of the native population, and threatened with a share of the punishment to be visited upon the government for the fancied insults and wrongs suffered by the people of those two nations.

But a short time before the event just recited, William Richards, a clergyman, and Timoteo Haalilio, of the King's suite, the first embassy from Hawaii, had left for the United States, thence to proceed to England and France, upon the errand of securing recognition of the independence of their government. Mr. Richards had been formerly sent to this country in 1836 by the King to secure, if possible, the service of some American eminent in public life as advisers to the chiefs; but his mission had been unsuccessful.

The embassy having arrived at Washington addressed a communication to Mr. Webster on the 14th of December, 1842, setting forth the situation of affairs in the Hawaiian Islands, reciting the progress of the people in the paths of civilization; their aspirations, and the necessity that demanded the formulation by the King of some definite foreign policy, and the assumption by his government of diplomatic relations with other powers.

Mr. Webster answered them on the 19th, declaring in the name of the President recognition of the independence of the Hawaiian Government and the sense of the United States that no interference with the King by foreign powers should be countenanced. He pointed out the interest of the American people in the islands and the reasons for such interest, and added that in so obvious a case the President did not regard a formal treaty or the establishment of formal diplomatic relations as then necessary. He concluded with the assurance that not improbably the correspondence would be made the subject of a communication to Congress, and be thus officially made known to the Governments of the principal commercial nations of Europe. The President communicated the correspondence to Congress on the 30th of December, with a special message declarative of his policy. (Appendix.)

This recognition of Hawaiian independence was, as we shall see, afterwards confirmed by Mr. Calhoun.

Proceeding to England the Hawaiian ambassadors were finally suc-