

death to escape decrepitude, or immolate themselves with a similar view, but families have such a repugnance to having deformed or maimed persons among them, that those who have met with such misfortunes, are almost always destroyed. An instance of this sort was related to me, when a boy whose leg had been bitten off by a shark was strangled, although he had been taken care of by one of the white residents, and there was every prospect of his recovery. No other reason was assigned by the perpetrators of the deed, than that if he had lived he would have been a disgrace to his family, in consequence of his having only one leg.

When a native, whether man, woman, or child, is sick of a lingering disease, their relatives will either wring their heads off, or strangle them. Mr. Hunt stated that this was a frequent custom, and cited a case where he had with difficulty saved a servant of his own from such a fate, who afterwards recovered his health.

Formal human sacrifices are frequent. The victims are usually taken from a distant tribe, and when not supplied by war or violence, they are at times obtained by negotiation. After being selected for this purpose, they are often kept for a time to be fattened. When about to be sacrificed, they are compelled to sit upon the ground, with their feet drawn under their thighs, and their arms placed close before them. In this posture they are bound so tightly that they cannot stir, or move a joint. They are then placed in the usual oven, upon hot stones, and covered with leaves and earth, where they are roasted alive. When the body is cooked, it is taken from the oven, and the face painted black, as is done by the natives on festal occasions. It is then carried to the mbure, where it is offered to the gods, and is afterwards removed to be cut up and distributed, to be eaten by the people.

Women are not allowed to enter the mbure, or to eat human flesh.

Human sacrifices are a preliminary to almost all their undertakings. When a new mbure is built, a party goes out and seizes the first person they meet, whom they sacrifice to the gods; when a large canoe is launched, the first person, man or woman, whom they encounter, is laid hold of and carried home for a feast.

When Tanoa launches a canoe, ten or more men are slaughtered on the deck, in order that it may be washed with human blood.

Human sacrifices are also among the rites performed at the funerals of chiefs, when slaves are in some instances put to death. Their bodies are first placed in the grave, and upon them those of the chief and his wives are laid.

The ceremonies attendant on the death and burial of a great chief, were described to me by persons who had witnessed them. When his