

ever, no want of attention to the aged who are not able to provide for themselves; and those who neglect their old relations are held in little respect. The aged enjoy much consideration, and, as I have before stated, great respect is paid to them in council.

More consideration is awarded to the female sex than has been observed in any of the other groups. All the hard labour is performed by the men, whose employment consists in building the houses and canoes, catching fish, collecting and bringing home the produce of their plantations, and attending to the cultivation of the taro, in which the women assist only by weeding the ground. The employment of the females is almost exclusively confined to in-door occupations, and those which we ourselves hold as belonging naturally to the sex, such as cooking and preparing food, braiding mats, &c., and they seem to have exclusive control over the house. The work of both sexes is, however, very light, and the greater proportion of their time is spent in pastimes, of which idleness forms the most considerable part. Although the women are relieved from the toils of life, yet they are not held to be above chastisement, and a man will not hesitate to strike a woman; but the fair ones consider themselves equally free, and seldom fail to return the blow, and the aggrieved party generally receives the aid of her companions, when the man is glad to escape from the bruises, blows, and scratches they inflict.

Among this people chastity is not regarded as a virtue, nor considered as any recommendation in the selection of a wife; but after marriage, a woman must be extremely guarded in her conduct, as the punishment for a want of duty in this respect is severe, even amounting to death in some cases; but it is usually limited to expulsion from her husband's house. Notwithstanding these penalties, there are frequent infractions of these ties, and it is not surprising that they should occur, under their system of polygamy, and the interdiction which prevents the younger brothers of chiefs, and persons who do not hold land, from marrying. Intrigues and elopements are not unfrequent, and produce the same results as elsewhere.

War, on all the islands with the exception of Makin, is a part of their business, and apparently engages most of their attention. Their conflicts may be considered as civil wars, for little communication is held between any of the islands, except those of Apamama, Nanouki, and Kuria, which are under the king of Apamama. The communication that takes place between the others is in consequence of the escape of individuals from punishment, or who become desperate, and embark in a canoe, to seek an asylum in some of the neighbouring islands. This is also the practice with the remaining portion of a defeated party, in