

the dark, and that when obliged to pass about their villages by night, they use flambeaux made of the dried stalks of the cocoanut-leaf to light them on their way. This fear is partly owing to superstition, which makes them fearful of encountering some spirit or *aitu*, with which their imaginations people the groves, springs, rocks, trees, &c. They are in the habit of occasionally making a feast for the king's *aitu*, when a number of pigs are prepared, and a quantity of taro, fruit, &c., is gathered. The portion for the *aitu* is placed near his supposed dwelling-place, and the dependants and others enjoy themselves on the remainder.

They were formerly in the habit of presenting their first fruits to the *aitus* and chiefs. This custom still continues among the heathen, but the Christian party present theirs to the missionaries. The ceremony usually takes place in January or February. In drinking *ava*, the first cup was always presented to the gods.

There is an account of a large lizard which dwells on the south side of the island, and is worshipped as an *aitu*. The description given of it makes it two fathoms long and as large round as a cocoa-nut tree, with huge scales, and a mouth filled with sharp teeth. It is said to dwell in a stream near *Safata*, into which the natives frequently throw meat. Some of them declare that they have seen him, and that he has dwelt there upwards of fifty years.

It is not remarkable, however, that they should have this tradition; and this circumstance affords an additional proof that they have had frequent intercourse with the *Tonga*, or *Friendly Islands*, where a similar tradition is spoken of in *Mariner's Tonga Islands*.

Among their other superstitions is that of a malignant spirit that resides in the vicinity of *Apolima*, in the shape of an enormous eel, of from six to ten fathoms long, and large in proportion, which attacks canoes and drags them down.

A story is told that is said to have happened only a few years ago. While two natives of *Manono* were swimming across the channel in the reef, they were drowned in the sight of many others; immediately a large canoe was manned, and went in quest of them; the crew of this canoe encountered the monster, and wounded it. The canoe was upset, and although a few saved themselves by swimming to the shore, the greater part of them were destroyed. When asked if it was not a shark, (of which they have two kinds, the *tanifa*, or great white shark, and the *masi*, or small blue one,) they replied, it was a monstrous *pasi*, which is the name applied to the *muræna* or conger eel.

Their dances and other amusements are in a great degree abolished, but they are still practised in the heathen villages, and even the