

## CHAPTER III.

### CUSTOMS OF THE FEEJEE GROUP.

1840.

BEFORE proceeding to the narration of the operations of the squadron in the Feejee Group, it would appear expedient to give some account of the people who inhabit the islands of which it is composed. A reader, unacquainted with their manners and customs, can hardly appreciate the difficulties with which the performance of our duties was attended, or the obstacles which impeded our progress. Our information, in relation to the almost unknown race which occupies the Feejee Group, was obtained from personal observation, from the statements of the natives themselves, and from white residents. I also derived much information from the missionaries, who, influenced by motives of religion, have undertaken the arduous, and as yet unprofitable task of introducing the light of civilization and the illumination of the gospel into this benighted region.

Although, as we shall see, the natives of Feejee have made considerable progress in several of the useful arts, they are, in many respects, the most barbarous and savage race now existing upon the globe. The intercourse they have had with white men has produced some effect on their political condition, but does not appear to have had the least influence in mitigating the barbarous ferocity of their character. In this group, therefore, may be seen the savage in his state of nature; and a comparison of his character with that of the natives of the groups in which the gospel has been profitably preached, will enable our readers to form a better estimate of the value of missionary labours, than can well be acquired in any other manner.

The Feejeeans are generally above the middle height, and exhibit a great variety of figure. Among them the chiefs are tall, well-made,