

vaka turanga Ratu Vasu-levu," (Hail! good is the coming hither of our noble Lord Nephew.)

When the Vasu-levu of Mbenga goes thither, honours almost divine are rendered him, for he is supposed to be descended in a direct line from gods. Mbenga formerly played a very conspicuous part in the affairs of the group, but of late years it happened to get into difficulties with Rewa, in consequence of which Ngaraningiou attacked it, conquered its inhabitants, and massacred many of them. Since that time it has had little or no political influence.

The hostile feelings of the different tribes makes war the principal employment of the males throughout the group; and where there is so strong a disposition to attack their neighbours, plausible reasons for beginning hostilities are not difficult to find. The wars of the Feejeeans usually arise from some accidental affront or misunderstanding, of which the most powerful party takes advantage to extend his dominions or increase his wealth. This is sometimes accomplished by a mere threat, by which the weaker party is terrified into submission to the demand for territory or property.

When threats fail, a formal declaration of war is made by an officer, resembling in his functions the heralds (*feciales*) of the Romans. Every town has one of these, who is held in much respect, and whose words are always taken as true. When he repairs to the town of the adverse party, where he is always received with great attention, he carries with him an *ava* root, which he presents to the chiefs, saying, "*Korai sa tatau, sa kalu,*" (I bid you goodbye, it is war.) The usual answer is, "*Sa vi naka, sa lako talo ki,*" (it is well, return home.) Preparations are then made on both sides, and when they mean to have a fair open fight, a messenger is sent from one party to ask the other, what town they intend to attack first. The reply is sometimes true, but is sometimes intended merely as a cover for their real intentions. In the latter case, however, it rarely succeeds; in the former, both parties repair to the appointed place.

In preparing for war, and during its continuance, they abstain from the company of women; and there were instances related to me, where this abstinence had continued for several years.

When a body made up of several tribes has approached near the enemy, the *vunivalu*, or general, makes a speech to each separate tribe. In this he does all in his power by praises, taunts, or exhortations, as he thinks best suited to the purpose, to excite them to deeds of bravery. To one he will talk in the following manner:

"You say you are a brave people. You have made me great pro-