

arrows. The gates or entrances are shut by sliding bars from the inside, and are defended on each side by structures of strong wicker-work, resembling bastions, which are placed about fifteen feet apart. When there is a ditch, the bridge across it is composed of two narrow logs. The whole arrangement affords an excellent defence against any weapons used by the natives of these islands, and even against musketry.

Sieges of these fortified places seldom continue long; for if the attacking party be not speedily successful, the want of provisions, of which there is seldom a supply for more than two or three days, compels them to retire. Although such assaults are of short duration, the war often continues for a long time without any decisive result.

If one of the parties desires peace, it sends an ambassador, who carries a whale's tooth, as a token of submission. The victorious party often requires the conquered to yield the right of soil, in which case the latter bring with them a basket of the earth from their district. The acceptance of this is the signal of peace, but from that time the conquered become liable to the payment of a yearly tribute. In addition to this burden, the more powerful tribes often send word to their dependencies that they have not received a present for a long time; and if the intimation has no effect, the message is speedily followed by an armed force, by which the recusant tribe or town is sometimes entirely destroyed. The bearer of such a message carries with him a piece of *ava*, which is given to the chief of the town in council, who causes it to be brewed, after which the message is delivered. But when an errand is sent to *Ambau*, or any superior chief, the messenger always carries with him a gift of provisions and other valuables.

If a town is compelled to entreat to be permitted to capitulate, for the purpose of saving the lives of its people, its chiefs and principal inhabitants are required to crawl towards their conquerors upon their hands and knees, suing for pardon and imploring mercy. The daughters of the chiefs are also brought forward and offered to the victors, while from the lower class victims are selected to be sacrificed to the gods. Even such hard conditions do not always suffice, but a whole population is sometimes butchered in cold blood, or reduced to a condition of slavery. To avoid such terrible consequences, most of the weak tribes seek security by establishing themselves on high and almost inaccessible rocks. Some of these are so steep that it would be hardly possible for any but one of the natives to climb them; yet even their women may be seen climbing their rocky and almost perpendicular walls, to heights of fifty or sixty feet, and carrying loads of water, yams, &c.