

sented to the parents. The acceptance of these signifies that the suit is favourably received; their rejection is a refusal of the suit.

If the proposals of the young man are received, he gives notice of it to his own relations, who take presents to his betrothed. Her own relations, by way of dowry, give her a stone-chopper (*matawiwi*) and two tapa-sticks (*eki*), after which the marriage may take place.

Among the common people the marriage rites are less ceremonious than those of the chiefs. The priest of the tribe comes to the house, when he is presented with a whale's tooth and a bowl of *ava*, and making a *sevu-sevu* (prayer), invokes happiness upon the union. The bride's near relations then present her with a large petticoat (*licolib*), and the more distant relatives make gifts of *tapas*, mats, and provisions.

Every man may have as many wives as he can maintain, and the chiefs have many betrothed to them at an early age, for the purpose of extending their political connexions by bonds which, according to their customs, cannot be overlooked.

The daughters of chiefs are usually betrothed early in life. If the bridegroom refuses to carry the contract into effect, it is considered as a great insult, and he may lay his account to have a contest with her relations and friends. If the betrothed husband die before the girl grows up, his next brother succeeds to his rights in this respect. Many of the marriages in high life are the result of mutual attachment, and are preceded by a courtship, presents, &c. The parties may be frequently seen, as among us, walking arm-in-arm after they are engaged. Forced marriages sometimes occur, although they are by no means frequent in this class; in such instances suicide is occasionally the consequence. A case of this sort had occurred previous to our arrival, when a daughter of the chief of *Ovolau* killed herself by jumping off a precipice behind the town, because she had been forced to marry a brother of *Tanoa*. The females of the lower classes have no such delicate scruples. Among them, marriages are mere matters of bargain, and wives are purchased and looked upon as property in most parts of the group. The usual price is a whale's tooth, or a musket; and this once paid, the husband has an entire right to the person of the wife, whom he may even kill and eat if he feel so disposed. Young women, until purchased, belong to the chief of the village, who may dispose of them as he thinks best. Elopements, however, sometimes take place, when a marriage is opposed from difference of rank or other cause, when the parties flee to some neighbouring chief, whom they engage to intercede and bring about a reconciliation.

Wives are faithful to their husbands rather from fear than from